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MPs rule out chance of Diana being Queen after admitting marriage is over

Bitter Princess seals her fate

COLIN BROWN
JAMES CUSICK
and MARIANNE MACDONALD

Pressure grew at Westminster last night for the Prince and Princess of Wales to agree an early divorce to avoid further damage to the monarchy in the wake of last night's BBC Panorama interview by Princess Diana.

Conservative MPs, including ministers, last night said that the Prime Minister's assurance that the Princess of Wales could become Queen was no longer tenable after her acceptance in the interview that the marriage was over.

The controversial interview was broadcast following an unprecedented security operation at BBC Television Centre, in west London, with only a handful of senior executives aware of its contents.

Such was the secrecy surrounding the project that three former Royal Marines were detailed to guard the door of the G3 studio in White City where the programme's titles and credits were being added. At the end of last week the studio, which is normally open to all BBC staff, was swept for bugging equipment in a bid to head off possible leaks - although in the event the only leaks of the content of the interview appear to have come from the Princess herself.

Prince Charles, who watched the programme at his home, Highgrove, in Gloucestershire, had earlier flown to Kensington Palace, although Buckingham Palace said he had not met his estranged wife. The palace said he had landed at the Princess's home because there was not space for everyone to land on the lawn at Buckingham Palace where the Queen gave a 60th birthday lunch for King Hussein of Jordan.

As the impact of the Panorama interview began to sink in, senior backbenchers were outspoken in

their contempt for the Princess: "Divorce: make her a Duchess and let her go to California. If you take the job you have to take the package," said one source close to the Conservative Party leadership.

The interview, which is thought to have been one of the most-viewed programmes ever shown by the

future King. The Prime Minister told MPs three years ago: "There is no reason why the Princess of Wales should not be crowned queen in due course."

A former Tory whip said: "The idea the Princess of Wales can be Queen is harpy. And the idea that the Prince of Wales can go to Westminster Abbey for the Coronation

that the marriage has irretrievably broken down."

The divorce was the main topic of gossip around the corridors and bars at Westminster but views were divided over whether Charles should remain heir, or whether it should pass straight to Prince William. A former minister said: "Yes, there will be a divorce but it means that Charles is finished."

Constitutional experts said the Princess's decision to go ahead with the interview without consulting the Queen could lead to a full-scale constitutional clash. Dr John Barnes, a reader in government history at the London School of Economics, believes that the way in which the authority of the Queen was ignored has brought the prospect of a republican United Kingdom nearer.

"Quite simply, Diana is stating, 'I'm no longer playing the game the firm's way. And I'm not going to tell the firm what I'm doing,'" he said, adding that this amounted to "the end of the Princess of Wales playing by even the minimum of royal rules."

Most MPs appear to hope that the Queen will withstand the controversy. Many reported that support for her, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Princess Royal remains high, in spite of a collapse of support in their constituencies for the rest of the Royal Family. Some Labour MPs believe the controversy should put the future of the Royal Family back on the political agenda. Denis McShane, the Labour MP for Rotherham, called for a referendum on the monarchy. He said it should be turned into a Scandinavian-style monarchy.

Michael Brown, a Tory backbencher, said: "I don't think if they were divorced it would be end of the world. Most of my constituents are saying it is a terrible situation and it is probably sensible to end it."

The Windsor war, page 3
Leading article, page 16



Charles and Camilla: Their relationship could stop him being king

BBC, appears to have hardened views against her at Westminster. There is widespread scepticism over the assurances given by the Prime Minister when he announced to the Commons on 10 December 1992 that Prince Charles and the Princess were separating after 11 years of marriage.

There was total disbelief at the prospect of the Princess becoming Queen, if she remains separated from

with [Camilla] Parker-Bowles while the Princess turns up in a carriage with one of her two friends is barking."

Toby Jessel, a Tory member of the Commons select committee on national heritage, said: "I think divorce should take place. Whether we wait 12 months or two years is a matter of judgement. It should take place in the reasonably near future. Public opinion has now broadly accepted



Out of the game: Princess Diana leaving her gym in London yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

US fights to save Bosnia peace talks

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The Balkan peace talks went into a nail-biting extra time yesterday, as negotiators struggled to resolve crucial territorial issues still blocking an overall settlement to the 42-month Bosnian civil war, the bloodiest and most destructive European conflict in half a century.

As the diplomatic world held its breath, US officials put off to an unspecified time an earlier deadline of a 10am EST (3pm GMT) "event" that would have been either a ceremony to initial a comprehensive peace treaty, or an announcement that the talks that began 20 days ago at a Midwestern air force base had failed.

As the hours slipped by, the omens fluctuated wildly. A session which was to wrap

things up on Sunday evening continued until 5.30am yesterday, amid alternating predictions of imminent agreement and irretrievable deadlock.

After a five-hour break, the discussions resumed, but with no word by early afternoon of when the "event" was to take place.

At the secluded complex at the Wright-Patterson US Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, where the multi-cornered negotiations were taking place, Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, was shuttling between the delegations headed by Presidents Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, seeking to bridge outstanding differences. Waiting in the wings was President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia who arrived yesterday from Zagreb, predicting that a deal would be struck.



Presidents Milosevic (left) and Izetbegovic: Struggle to settle their last remaining differences

In Washington, President Bill Clinton, who has promised 20,000 US troops to help Nato police a settlement, was said to be ready to participate in person, "if that would help them get an agreement", according to the

White House spokesman, Mike McCurry. In New York, the UN Security Council was poised to lift economic sanctions imposed in 1992 against the Serbian rump of former Yugoslavia, in the event of an accord.

According to officials, two territorial disputes had caused the 11th hour hold-up: the corridor to link Sarajevo with Gorazde, the last remaining Muslim enclave in Eastern Bosnia, and another in the north of the country, to link Serb territory in western and eastern Bosnia, and which the Serbs insist must be widened.

At mid-morning, Nick Burns, the State Department spokesman who repeatedly stressed Washington's determination that the talks must end yesterday, came what may, insisted the "event" would take place in the afternoon. But Balkan officials indicated that proceedings might continue for the rest of the day, amid some predictions that the bargaining would yield only a partial agreement, covering constitutional issues, leaving the thorniest territorial problems in a later date.

This would be a disappointment for the Americans, whose relentless efforts to broker a settlement have been mainly responsible for this best, and perhaps last, chance of a negotiated end to the war, though less of a blow than the outright collapse of the talks at Dayton, or a cosmetic and bogus overall agreement that could quickly fall apart.

A peace settlement would divide Bosnia into two separate "entities," controlled by the Croat-Muslim federation and the Bosnian Serb on a roughly 51-49 basis, and linked by a weak central government.

The Muslim-led government is adamant that the outcome must not be partition by another name, or a solution that permits the Bosnian Serb portion to secede and unite with Serbia proper.

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IN BRIEF

West jury sent to hotel
The jury in the Rosemary West murder trial were sent to a hotel last night after failing to reach verdicts. Page 2

Housing gloom
Mortgage lending in October has crashed to the lowest level since 1979. Page 2

Poland's 'great hope'
Poland's new president hailed as young followers as "our greatest hope". Page 12

Today's weather
Wet across much of the UK to start, but drier and brighter weather later. Section Two, Page 21

£1.1bn takeover fear
Cable & Wireless is bracing itself for a possible £1.1bn takeover bid. Page 20

Major goes off roads
A decisive shift away from public funding of the £1.8bn roads programme was confirmed by John Major. Page 2

Labour attacks BSKyB
Labour last night called on the Government to refer Rupert Murdoch's BSKyB, to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Page 10

Blair's local authority has worst schools

JUDITH JUDD
and FRAN ABRAMS

The top comprehensives

- (Percentage of pupils getting five or more GCSEs at grades A-C)
1. Liverpool Blue Coat School (98%)
 2. Old Swinford Hospital School, Dudley (92%)
 3. The Coopers' Company and Coborn, Havering (92%)
 4. Hertfordshire and Essex High, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (90%)
 5. Westford Grammar School for Girls, Hertfordshire (87%)
 6. Westford Grammar School for Boys, Hertfordshire (86%)
 7. Dame Alice Owen's, Putney, London (86%)
 8. The King's School, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (84%)

Full list in Section Two

Liverpool Blue Coat School, where 98 per cent of pupils got five or more good passes. At the worst three comprehensives no pupil got five A-C passes. The average was 43.5 per cent.

The best state school is King Edward VI grant-maintained

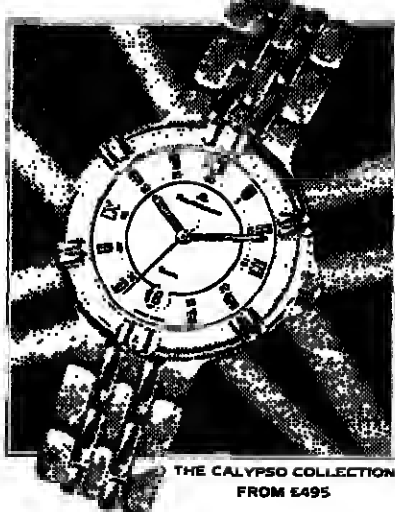
grammar school in Chelmsford, Essex, where the average A-level score was equivalent to just over three A grades. The fee-paying King Edward VI School for Girls in Birmingham is top overall with an average A-level score of two As and two Bs.

The state school with the biggest improvement is Saint Francis Xavier, in Richmond, North Yorkshire, where the percentage of pupils getting five or more A-C grades at GCSE rose from 29 per cent last year to 61 per cent. The independent school with the biggest improvement was Trinity School, Teignmouth, in Devon, where the proportion of pupils getting five or more A-C grades rose from 31 per cent to 71.

Lord Henley, the Schools Minister, said that in the battle to raise standards, "these tables represent a fourth consecutive victory".

Schools grow apart, page 5

Maurice Lacroix
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news

Major clears path for Budget tax cuts

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

A decisive shift away from public funding of the £1.8bn roads programme was confirmed by John Major last night in a clear pre-Budget warning that further shrinking of the state was needed to make way for tax cuts.

The Prime Minister used his speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet last night to reassert his commitment - eight days before the Budget - not only to lower taxes but to bringing public spending's share of national

income to below 40 per cent. It is currently 42 per cent.

And he identified a first tranche of £400m in private funding for four road schemes as a key example of contracts worth more than £5bn signed under the Treasury's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) - which he said "will play an increasing part in capital investment in the future".

Spending ministers have been warned by William Waldegrave, the Treasury Chief Secretary, throughout the current spending round that they face deep

cuts in capital programmes unless they can secure private funding. The roads programme is widely reported through Whitehall to have taken one of the severest cuts.

Echoing more strongly worded calls for lower public spending by Mr Waldegrave and Christopher Patten, the former party chairman, Mr Major said that while the United Kingdom's public spending's share of national income was 10 per cent below the European average, "we cannot afford to compare ourselves with our European

neighbours alone". He added: "Both America and Japan spend less and tax less than we do."

Mr Major told his City audience that "when the private sector takes responsibility and bears the risk, it is more efficient than the public sector". And he went on to announce Roadlink's winning bid to build and operate the upgraded A69 between Newcastle and Carlisle. The other three in the first £400m programme are the A1(M) from Alconbury to Peterborough, the A1/M1 link in Yorkshire and the A419/417

Swindon to Gloucester route.

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, will today outline his plans for the first of twenty-five PFI projects worth up to £25m, but will stress that private funding will apply to capital programmes only and not to clinical provision by doctors and nurses.

The Prime Minister last night repeated earlier warnings that economic monetary union (EMU) would divide the European Union between those countries which adopted the single currency and those which

did not. He added that while "in some areas of policy" such variable geometry "may be desirable, indeed, inevitable" it had to be "thought through".

He said the implications included how a single currency would co-exist with present ones; how EU institutions would serve those outside as well as those inside EMU; and what it would mean for the community budget and the single market.

The Prime Minister conspicuously did not - as some right wing Tories both inside and outside the Government would like him to do - rule out membership of EMU during the lifetime of the next parliament. Instead, his emphasis on the importance of the issues EMU would raise for countries outside as well as inside it chimed closely with his warning last week that he was not going to "surrender influence" on such issues by ruling out monetary union. He repeated that some were "passionate about EMU", others have profound doubts. "Britain, I am glad to say, has a choice. We can decide whether to stay out or opt in".

IN BRIEF

Air crash boxer wins £1.5m award

An Irish boxer disabled for life in the Kegworth air disaster was awarded record damages of £1,425,000 in the High Court yesterday.

Stephen McCoy, 23, a former top amateur middleweight boxer in Northern Ireland, was 16 when the Boeing 737 London to Belfast shuttle crashed on the M1 in Leicestershire in 1989. He was left brain damaged and partly paralysed by the crash which claimed 47 lives and is looked after by his family.

The damages are to be paid by the airline British Midland and the engine manufacturers and suppliers, who admitted liability.

Railtrack pressure

Labour last night called on the rail regulator, John Swift QC, to investigate its charge that Railtrack has put aside £1bn of taxpayers' money to boost profits after privatisation. Brian Wilson, the party's transport spokesman, has already demanded a Stock Exchange inquiry into Railtrack's accounts.

Howard right

A decision by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to lay a parole hearing for life prisoner Joseph Martin was upheld by a High Court judge as "reasonable and lawful". The 62-year-old double killer, who has served 30 years, can expect to spend at least another two years - and possibly right up to retirement age - in custody.

Quiet victory

More than half of Britain came to a halt to observe the Armistice Day two-minute silence, it was disclosed after an opinion poll found that 57 per cent of people questioned observed the silence. The Royal British Legion described the response as "outstanding".

Double strike

Fire crews on Merseyside have announced two new 24-hour strikes, two hours apart, starting on Friday and Saturday, over fire authority plans to axe 20 jobs and alter shift patterns to bridge a £700,000 budget shortfall. Army and RAF crews will be drafted in to provide cover.

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Peace in Ireland: Fresh move by Downing Street aims to build confidence but Unionist leader takes hard line

Tories pledge to review role of RUC

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government mounted a fresh attempt to encourage Sinn Féin to enter the peace process talks by promising the most fundamental review of the Royal Ulster Constabulary so far carried out.

Coming days after the early release of more than 80 IRA and loyalist paramilitaries, it was seen as another confidence-building measure to get Sinn Féin to compromise over the refusal of the IRA to move on the decommissioning of its weapons.

Disarming the IRA last night threatened to produce fresh troubles in the attempts by the Irish and British governments to revive the peace process.

The Irish government was unhappy with the letter sent to John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, by John Major setting out plans for a twin-track strategy involving the creation of an international commission to oversee decommissioning, and preparatory talks with the parties, leading to possible all-party talks by next February.

Mr Major is sticking to the requirement set out by Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in Washington for progress to be made on decommissioning before Sinn Féin can enter the all-party talks. But Mr Bruton is supporting the nationalists in asking for that pre-condition, known as "Washington Three", to be considered by the international commission.

Last night, Downing Street made it clear the Irish request was unacceptable. Mr Bruton will be seeking to resolve the difficulty on the telephone with Mr Major today, but it could delay

the hopes of an early summit between them until after the visit by Bill Clinton, the US President, on 28 November.

The British are keen for an early summit meeting, but the Irish - having aborted a summit in September - want to reach agreement behind the scenes on the decommissioning issue before a high-profile meeting between the two leaders.

"The thinking in Irish circles is that we want a formula that can get us over this problem. If the remit doesn't include Washington Three, there is a danger that we will have to come back to this problem at a later date," said one Irish source.

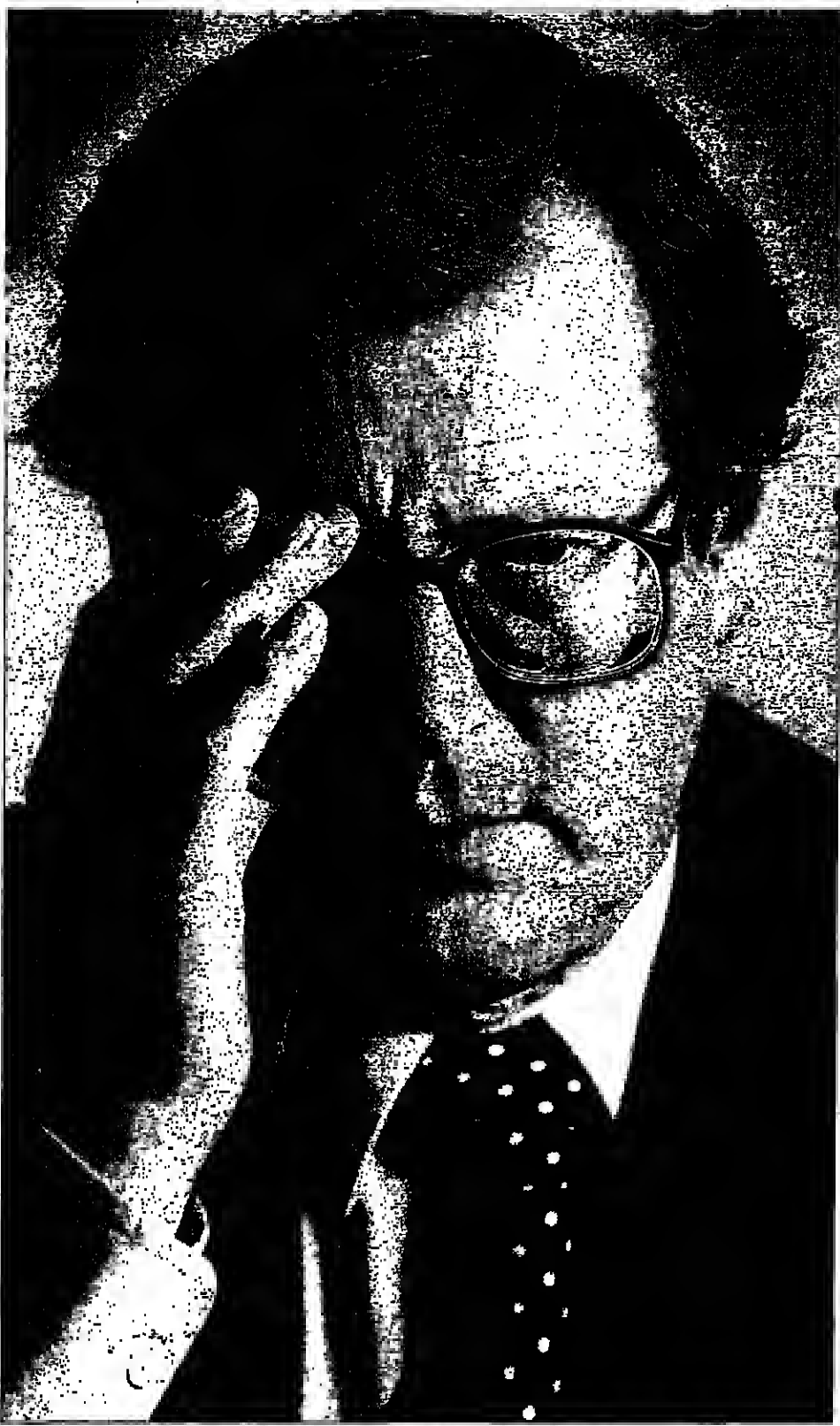
"There are things that will be difficult for everyone but it can be overcome with courage and imagination. We are prepared to do that," a senior government source said.

The prospects for agreement may have been enhanced by the announcement of the review of the RUC. A White Paper on the relationships between the Secretary of State, police authority and the RUC Chief Constable will also be published before Christmas.

Sinn Féin has been demanding radical reforms to the RUC, including the change of its name, to drop "Royal" from its title. Officials at the Northern Ireland Office are hoping to have the policing review completed by next summer.

The security minister, Sir John Wheeler, said the aim of the White Paper and the review was to strengthen the police service as the demands changed to a peacetime scenario and to make it acceptable to the community it serves.

Sir John added: "No area will be excluded. It will be pretty dramatic stuff."



Trimble: Adams and McGuinness are the Karadzic and Mladic of Ulster. Photograph: Philip Meach

Trimble rules out talks with Sinn Féin

COLIN BROWN

David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, has virtually ruled out face-to-face talks with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, the Sinn Féin leaders. He said they were "not fit" to sit down with at the negotiating table.

"Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams are the Karadzic and Mladic of Northern Ireland. They are not regarded as fit persons to sit at the table in view of their record."

"I don't envisage a situation of personal contact with those gentlemen. It is possible if circumstances were right, there might be a talks process. But I don't see that in the short term. It is for that reason we have emphasised the advantage of going down the route of creating an elected body at which there could be the beginnings of a debate," Mr Trimble said.

Despite his tough talking in an interview for the Independent, he did not rule out joining the talks process. But if they proceed to all-party talks, it is hard to see how he will agree to be in the same room as Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness.

Mr Trimble said the speech by the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, amounted to a "blunt demand to drop the decommissioning requirement" for the IRA to give up weapons before Sinn Féin could join all-party inclusive talks. "That is what it boils down to. That is not realistic politics."

Would John Major give way? "Not after all he has said and done on this issue."

So he was confident Mr Major would not cave in? "I don't want to use that sort of language. He knows what our position is. It's rather difficult to

see how such a U-turn could be justified. In any event, such a U-turn would be ineffective, because talks with out our presence would be a meaningless exercise. We would have to be satisfied in our own terms that the circumstances were right for talks."

The underlying message is that the Ulster Unionists are willing to go along with the Major initiative, albeit reluctantly. Mr Trimble, who was given 15 minutes with Bill Clinton at the White House recently, does not believe the US President's visit at the end of the month will contribute much to the peace process.

"In a general sense, the Clinton visit will be helpful because he is bringing a large entourage of officials and businessmen. They are all going to discover the degree of normality, that the worst affected areas of Belfast are a damned sight better than typical American inner city areas."

"That is going to be useful in changing the perception. Apart from that, I don't have any great expectation from the visit."

It's obvious that the republicans think Mr Clinton is their special factor who is going to make the British government change its policy, but we'll see."

Mr Trimble added: "It's not in Clinton's interests to pressurise some sort of artificial political development because he has got to look forward to November 1996 polling day."

He has got to say, 'Are my actions going to look good a year from now?'

"Resorting to short-term panic pressure from Sinn Féin, SDLP or whatever, is not in his interests and I think his advisers are sensible enough to realise that."

Rosemary West trial: Jury spends night in hotel after five hours weighing evidence

Tension rises as verdict is delayed

WILL BENNETT

The jury in the Rosemary West murder trial was sent to a hotel last night after failing to reach verdicts during nearly five hours of deliberations. They will resume their discussions this morning.

The seven men and four women were sent out at 11.44am yesterday by Mr Justice Mantell, who told them to take their time. The judge finished his summing up, which had lasted more than two days, by telling jurors that they must consider whether Mrs West had ever told lies.

In particular, they must consider what she had said about Caroline Owens who was sexually assaulted by Mrs West and her husband Frederick, and Lynda Gough and Heather West, whose remains were found at the Wests' home.

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young

women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and at the Wests' previous home in the city. Mr West who was charged with 12 murders was found hanged in his prison cell last New Year's Day.

The judge said: "Of course whether in any particular incidents Rosemary West has told lies is for you to say. She has not admitted telling any lies, but suppose you were to find that she had. The mere fact that a defendant has told a lie is not in itself evidence of guilt. A defendant may lie for many reasons." He said if the jury thought that there was an innocent reason for the lie they should disregard it, but if it was for another reason such as to mislead an investigation "then the lie may be evidence of guilt."

He went on: "You could come to the conclusion that Rosemary West lied about hearing from Heather [the Wests' daughter]. Suppose you came to



Fate in balance: A drawing of Rosemary West yesterday

the conclusion that Rosemary West was telling Mrs Gough [Lynda's mother] lies about Lynda having gone to Weston-on-Trent that it was a lie that Mrs Gough had never been to 25 Cromwell Street. Rosemary West told you that she had tried and tried to remember

Caroline Owens, even though she had the newspaper report [of the Wests' prosecution] and had kept it all those years.

"Suppose you came to the conclusion that she had told you a lie about that, and came to the conclusion that there was no innocent explanation, then once again you have to consider whether that is evidence supporting the prosecution."

The judge said that the evidence of Mrs Owens, Anne Marie Davis, Mrs West's stepdaughter, and a woman referred to only as Miss A, who were all sexually assaulted by the Wests, was important.

"In relation to all three of them, you have been told by the witnesses about the use of restraints, gags, tape, force and sexual abuse. The Crown says that in the case of seven of the charges you have to consider that that evidence is capable of illuminating the circumstances which must have preceded

death. The inference which the Crown invite you to accept is only available to you if you accept the evidence of these witnesses, not otherwise."

The judge said that in relation to Charmaine West the daughter of Mr West's first wife, the prosecution case was that Mr West had been in prison at the time of her death leaving Rosemary West in sole charge.

He said that in the case of Shirley Robinson, a lodger whose remains were found at Cromwell Street, the prosecution case depended on antipathy, motive and the evidence that Mrs West was in the house when she met her death. It was also alleged that the Wests had lied about her disappearance.

"So far as Heather is concerned antipathy, opportunity and once again lies," said the judge. But he warned that they should not "pass moral judgements" on sexual relationships in the Wests' household.

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NIC CICCITI

Fresh evidence of the slump in the housing market emerged yesterday, with figures showing that new mortgage lending in October fell to the lowest level since the Tories came to office in 1979.

Net advances by building societies to home-buyers fell to £295m last month, less than half the £614m lent in September. The societies' figures came amid signs that the construction industry is heading into a fresh recession. Orders dropped by

1.4 per cent in the third quarter of 1995 compared to the previous three months. They were 3.1 per cent down on the same quarter last year.

Rob Thomas, a housing analyst at the Swiss banking group UBS, said: "These figures are gloomy. The market this year has not been good, but this is the worst so far."

Other experts suggested the rapid collapse followed two months in which lending only remained at that already low level because prospective borrowers moved swiftly to avoid

the Government's mortgage benefit cuts in October.

The Building Societies Association said yesterday that gross lending, which includes people re-mortgaging their homes, fell slightly to £2.6bn in October, compared to £2.72bn the previous month. Net new commitments, the amount societies have agreed to lend in principle, grew to almost £2.9bn from £2.56bn.

Separate statistics from the British Bankers Association showed loans secured on property stood at £509m in October,

more than £100m down on the two previous months.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said yesterday: "Over recent months total lending activity has remained fairly steady compared with previous year levels. However, a significant proportion of overall lending business is believed to have represented re-mortgage activity, rather than lending related to house purchase. The number of loans advanced for actual house purchase has fallen by 17 per cent compared with the corresponding period

in 1994." Mr Williams renewed BSA calls for Budget measures to help property buyers, including the abolition of stamp duty on purchases over £50,000.

However, his views were sharply contradicted by Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC Greenwich, who said: "The building societies are being disingenuous and using statistics they believe will help them in their arguments over the Budget. The fact is that this is another extremely strong set of data."

Business comment, page 21

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Labour fine

ROYAL FAMILY AT WAR

Panorama interview: Princess of Wales has seized the initiative but the decision to go public may undermine her position

Revelations that raise the stakes for Diana

LOUISE JURY

As the Princess of Wales arrived for her regular gym work-out yesterday, her smile was as devastating as the *Panorama* interview on which she had gambled her future relations with the Royal family.

She entered the Chelsea Harbour Club, in west London, in bright orange shorts and blue sweatshirt, posing only for a very public display of courtesy as she held open the front door for a man carrying heavy bags.

The world's most photographed woman was back firmly where she seems happiest - in the limelight. But behind the scenes, there were huge question marks over the interview's likely impact on her marriage, separation and position as the mother of the future king.

Buckingham Palace yesterday confirmed Geoff Crawford was to stand down as the Princess's press adviser in the wake of her decision to speak to the BBC's flagship current affairs programme without informing him - or the Queen.

As speculation grew that the Palace could not forgive her secrecy over the affair, the suggestion arose that airing her private thoughts in public could prove a dangerous miscalculation, leaving her alongside the Duchess of York in Royal exile.

The Princess's decision to go ahead came nearly three years after her separation from the Prince - and two since she stunned guests at a charity lunch by announcing plans to bow out of public life and spend more time with her children.

It came 17 months after Charles bared his soul and admitted adultery in an interview with Jonathan Dimbleby, a broadcast which she shrugged off by donning a striking sexy black dress and attending a charity gala.

More significantly, perhaps, it came in the wake of a series of salacious tabloid stories which accused the Princess of bombarding her friend Oliver Hoare with nuisance calls and wrecking the marriage of the England rugby captain, Will Carling.

The public "coming out" of Charles and Camilla at the 50th birthday party of Sarah Kewick at the Ritz on 18 October was the final straw. The BBC was given its scoop.

The desire to "set the record straight" must have been strong. None the less, the timing was ironic. The most explosive Royal performance since Edward VIII took to the radio for his abdication speech in 1936 was filmed on 5 November. It was a day of fireworks and, some would claim, betrayal.

Barely a soul knew. The Princess was understood to have discussed the idea with the Duchess of York. Unconfirmed reports suggested that David Putnam, the film producer and Diana's friend, asked the broadcaster Ludovic Kennedy how she should handle some forthcoming television appearances. But in a breathtaking coup for the Princess and the BBC, not a word leaked out until she broke the news to the Palace herself and a public announcement was made last Tuesday.

Details of the negotiations have been closely guarded. But that this was Diana signalling she will not be silenced must have been noted with some alarm by Buckingham Palace.

In case they missed the strength of her power and charm, she went out on the town last night as guest of honour at a £1,000-a-head cancer charity gala at Bridgewater House, just yards from her estranged husband's London front door at St James's Palace.

The *Panorama* interview was a high-profile, high-risk strategy to get the public on her side and regain the upper hand for herself and her children.

The sight of the Royal aide Tiggy Legge-Bourke acting as surrogate mother to the young prince and speculation that steps were being taken to acclimatise the public to a Charles-Camilla partnership have rocked the boat for Diana.

Although the bitter rows and her fight against bulimia had left her thin and pale by the time of the official separation in December 1992, the Princess was then deemed to have outmanoeuvred Buckingham Palace. She was left with her own private court at Kensington Palace and with authority over her boys unchallenged.

The question today is whether in laying down her vision of her future she has trumped the Palace again. Or whether, by risking all, it will be the Princess who loses.



Brief encounter: The Princess of Wales with her husband and the young princes, William and Harry, on William's first day at Eton last September

Key players stick to their schedule as drama unfolds

IAN MACINNION

As the clock ticked toward the *Panorama* theme music, the key players in the Royal drama played their parts unflinchingly and apparently without a care. Leading royals stuck firmly to their schedule of engagements outlined in the Court Circular and fixed months in advance of word of the Princess of Wales's revelations.

Similarly, for the bit part actors on the fringes of the affair, it was business as usual as they kept up the façade of unflap-

pability in the face of potentially damning remarks. In the midst of it all, the Queen Mother, one of the rocks on which the royal dynasty is founded, remained in King Edward VII's Hospital for Officers in London recovering from her hip operation.

Buckingham Palace reported that she had a "quiet and satisfactory" weekend. "Her Majesty has become more mobile and is now walking outside her room," said a spokesman.

Both Prince Charles and Prince Edward visited their grandmother over the weekend

and told journalists on leaving that she was in good spirits.

Prince Charles had returned to Highgrove House, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire, where he was met shortly before 10am yesterday by Camilla Parker-Bowles. She smiled and posed for photographers as she left Highgrove to join the 60-strong Beaufort hunt at Leighton, a mile from the estate. Prince Charles, who normally joins the hunt later in the day, was nowhere to be seen.

At 12.15pm - as Mrs Parker-Bowles continued the hunt - a

helicopter from the Queen's Flight left Highgrove taking Prince Charles to Kensington Palace. Thirty minutes later a grim-faced Prince Charles left for Buckingham Palace where the Queen, who had returned from Sandringham, hosted a 60th birthday lunch in honour of King Hussein of Jordan.

Among the guests were, John Major, ex-King Constantine of Greece, Queen Noor of Jordan, Queen Anne-Marie of Greece, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Prince Edward. Prince Philip moved smoothly on to his next

engagement, the opening of an exhibition of Jain art from India at the Victoria and Albert museum in Kensington, west London. He joined the Queen at the Dominion Theatre in London's West End for a Royal Variety Performance, which continued as the Princess's interview was broadcast.

Prince Charles, on the other hand, had returned to Highgrove where, it is thought, he watched the interview before boarding the royal train at midnight, bound for Cornwall and another round of engagements

today. In contrast, the Princess of Wales was guest of honour at a £1,000-a-head gala for a cancer charity.

Another of those implicated in the drama, the England rugby captain, Will Carling, spent the day at the offices of his management consultancy in Fulham, south-west London. With the Princess linked to the separation from his wife, Julia, he was saying little, though he was reported to be "feeling much better" after being concussed during England's defeat by South Africa at the weekend.

Rival courts that may lead to a constitutional crisis

JAMES CUSICK

Britain today has returned to the 18th-century days of having two rival royal courts. With the Princess of Wales boldly bypassing the authority of the sovereign and stating to a world-wide audience of 200 million that she will determine her own role and how the heir to the throne will be brought up, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has now entered a full-scale constitutional crisis, according to a leading government historian.

Dr John Barnes, of the London School of Economics, believes that the ignoring of the Queen's authority and of the precedents laid out in the 1701 Act of Settlement has brought the prospect of a republican UK nearer.

Diana's self-appointed agenda, according to Dr Barnes, means "we have returned to the days of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and George III. Then there was a classic royal confrontation between the opposition politicians comprising the Tories and dissident Whigs who courted the future king in his own rival court against George's own court". Only the death of Frederick, killed by an ill-guided cricket ball, avoided open royal warfare.



The emergence of party government, and the end of the sovereign's power to appoint the Prime Minister, effectively ended court rivalry inside the monarchy. Until now.

"Diana, by going on television, has now set up her own rival show to the Queen," said Dr Barnes. "This is such an old-fashioned way of playing royal politics, that the British people will simply not be used to what is about to happen. The Princess of Wales is demanding all of the privileges, but is taking on none of the obligations."

The "extraordinary position" of the princess, according to an-

other historian close to the royal family, differed slightly from the Prince of Wales's own television interview just over a year ago. It is understood that Charles advised the Queen what he was about to do and she reluctantly agreed to the cameras coming in. Diana kept hidden until the last moment all details of the *Panorama* programme and at no time sought the Queen's authorisation.

Dr Barnes said: "Quite simply - regardless of what the *Panorama* chat contained - Diana is stating 'I'm no longer playing the game the firm's way. And I'm not going to tell the firm what I'm doing.'" It was, said Dr Barnes, the end of the princess playing by even the minimum of royal rules.

Her comments that William, the future king, will be brought up under her guidance may appear a casual comment by a young mother. Inside sources in Buckingham Palace yesterday were not so understanding.

When the Act of Succession was drawn up at the beginning of the 18th century, stipulating the sovereign would be brought up in the Protestant faith, and that the sovereign would be responsible for an heir's education (and at that time marriage), it was a system that attempted to control the future monarch. Al-

though the Act still remains, Diana has for the first time said it is her business, and not the Queen's, to be responsible for William. "We will now need to wait and see how Diana intends to enforce this," Dr Barnes said.

The resignation of the Buckingham Palace-appointed press secretary to Diana, Geoff Crawford, may be the start of an exodus of "Palace" staff. According to another Buckingham Palace source the "contractual mess" which Diana is now facing with the BBC over financial rights to the interview "would never have happened" had she been properly advised.

The solution to avoid constitutional chaos? "You remove the fuel from the fire by divorce," said Dr Barnes. The Princess of Wales said no to any talk of divorce, but Dr Barnes said there will now be immense pressure for her to do so. "She will become a loose cannon if she is the ex-wife of Charles, but that will be less embarrassing than her becoming Queen."

As well as Diana playing games by her own rules, Dr Barnes believes the BBC "showed very poor judgement". He said they treated Diana "as a personality and not as a crucial part of the constitution. In doing so they have helped bring a republic that bit closer".

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Labour finds window of opportunity

JOHN RENTOUIL
Political Correspondent

Labour scooped a record-breaking audience for a party political broadcast last night, as the nation tuned in for the news before the royal interview, and found itself watching "On The Slide" instead.

The five-minute black-and-white film, made by Howard Guard, attacked the Conservatives' record and set out the shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's plans for "fair taxes".

The timing of yesterday's broadcast was agreed two months ago, long before the Princess of Wales agreed to give her interview to *Panorama*. By chance, it was the first time a broadcast has been screened on

a Monday outside an election campaign, because there is live football on television tonight, tomorrow and Thursday nights, and Labour insisted on a broadcast the week before the Budget. David Hill, the party's chief spokesman, said it was the party's sixth broadcast this year. The Tories have only used two of their permitted six. "They neither feel they have a message worth putting across, nor do they have any coherent line of attack against us," he said.

A Tory party spokesman said: "All the research indicates that PPs only have any real impact in the run-up to an election. We are quite content for Labour to continue to waste resources on the wrong kind of advertising at the wrong time of year."

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2,200 mega-watts	April 1991: <i>Darling Buds</i> of May.
2,100 mega-watts	May 1991: <i>Darling Buds</i> of May.
1,100 mega-watts	11 April 1994: <i>Coronation Street</i> and <i>EastEnders</i> ran head to head and finished at the same time. 16.09 million viewers for <i>EastEnders</i> .
8 May 1995: <i>Dallas</i> and <i>This Is Your Life</i> ended at the same time.	
16 January 1994: <i>The Thornbirds</i> .	
1,900 mega-watts	5 April 1994: <i>EastEnders</i> . 18.20 million viewers.
1,800 mega-watts	29 July 1991: Diana and Charles's wedding.
9 April 1992: <i>EastEnders</i> . 18.57 million viewers.	
8 September 1992: <i>EastEnders</i> . 19.26 million viewers.	
700 mega-watts	29th June 1994: Prince Charles's Dimbleby interview.

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Yorkshire pours in cash to fight drought

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Yorkshire Water yesterday doubled its efforts to bring water to the region's drought-hit cities by road. But the company also said recent rainfall meant there would now be no need for on-off rota cuts for some 600,000 people until January at the earliest.

Up to 600 road tankers will move millions of gallons a day, an operation unprecedented for a British water company. New slip roads, lorry parks and gantries carrying hoses have had to be installed.

"We're not out of the woods," said a spokesman. "If people think we're crying wolf, they should come and look at the reservoirs."

The emptiest of these are now 13 per cent full, slightly up

on a week ago. But normally at this time of year they would be 80 per cent full, or 35 per cent in a bad year.

For the past 10 weeks a growing number of tankers have been taking water from Loftsome Bridge water treatment works, near Selby, more than 40 miles to Halifax and Huddersfield, the worst affected areas.

Yesterday two new tankering operations began. One will be bringing up to 25,000 tons of water a day from Long Newton reservoir, on Teesside, to reservoirs serving Leeds, using up to 300 tankers.

They will work 24 hours a day, making several of the 130-mile round trips. Much of the water they are bringing comes ultimately from Kielder Water, in Northumberland, the largest man-made reservoir in Europe, having first moved by pipeline,

then the river Tyne, then another pipeline to the reservoir.

The other operation is bringing water from the mains of York to Leeds, using 50 tankers. All the tankers have to be steam cleaned before they can carry water, and the total operation is costing the company about £3m a week.

Yorkshire Water has brought in one of Britain's largest road freight firms, Exel Logistics, to run the entire operation from next Monday. But the owners of some small haulage firms whose tankers and drivers have been sub-contracted are warning that their pay and conditions will deteriorate sharply under the new regime.

"If this new system goes ahead it means 1 and many other drivers will pack up," said one company owner, who has hired 10 tankers and taken on

drivers who were on the dole. He claimed the vehicles would have to be driven dangerously fast if they were to make any money from their contracts.

Yorkshire Water said talks between sub-contractors and Exel Logistics were continuing and it would not compromise on road safety.

Last week the Government held a public inquiry into Yorkshire Water's request for an emergency drought order which would allow it to cut off households for 24 hours at a time.

The inquiry inspector's report will be with the Department of the Environment in the next few days. But John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, will not have to make a decision on whether to allow the cut-offs until the time comes when Yorkshire Water says it needs to implement them.

William Hill takes gamble on Irish lottery to reverse decline

GREG WOOD

William Hill yesterday opened a new front in the bookmaking industry's response to the National Lottery when it started to accept bets on the winning numbers in the Irish state lottery. Punters will be able to bet on selecting between one and five of the correct numbers, with a maximum pay-out of £100,000.

Hills, along with other bookmakers, bingo halls, casinos and pools companies, has seen betting turnover drop significantly in the 12 months since the launch of the British lottery. Its new bet on the Irish numbers is an attempt both to arrest the decline and to persuade the Government to allow similar wagers on the domestic draw.

"We are 20 million betting slips down, January to November, year on year," Graham Sharpe, William Hill's spokesman, said yesterday. "The National Lottery is the only thing we are not allowed



Luck of the Irish: The new William Hill coupon

to bet on by law. If we wanted to bet on whether Charles will divorce Di after *Panorama*... or on whether someone will assassinate John Major, we could, it's just that we choose not to."

The mechanics of the Irish lottery are similar to Britain's, with six winning numbers and a bonus ball, although in Ireland there are 42 balls, seven fewer than in Britain, and two weekly draws. The odds offered by Hills' "Lucky Numbers" coupon

vary from 4-1, for picking any one of the seven winning numbers, to 32,767-1, for selecting five out of the first six numbers.

In strict mathematical terms, the prices are not generous, but they are better than those offered by Camelot. Any three from six in the weekly British draw pays £10, or odds of 9-1 (the actual chance is 56-1), while a similar perm with the new Hills coupon would pay at over 16-1.

The launch of the new bet coincided with figures which showed that the lottery has now overtaken the betting shop industry in its contribution to the Exchequer. During its first 46 weeks, the Government's 12 per cent cut of ticket sales was £468m. Betting duty was £461m during the same period.

The news will renew calls from bookmakers to even out what they see as unfair advantages granted to Camelot to guarantee a successful launch of the lottery. Apart from its monopoly on betting on its winning numbers, the company is allowed to advertise on television and radio, and also to sell tickets to 16 and 17-year-olds. The National Lottery Charities Board handed out a further £35m in grants yesterday, which included a £477,000 grant to a Birmingham project for the mentally ill. The allocation of the second tranche of grants followed criticisms that the board had fallen into the clutches of political correctness.



Celebrity sale: A Christie's official holds a 19th-century bronze, one of numerous items from the main Paris home of Rudolf Nureyev, who died in 1993. Fans and collectors have been bidding for the ballet star's clothing and other artefacts in a two-day sale, which ends today and is expected to fetch more than £2m. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

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Examination league tables: Critics fear 'damaging consequences' for those performing poorly in comparisons of grades

Best and worst in schools grow further apart

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

The gap between the pupils who do best at GCSE and those who do worst is widening, according to the Government's tables of school examination performance published today.

Critics say the polarisation is the result of the league tables which encourage schools to concentrate on getting the maximum number of pupils through five GCSEs at top grades - the main measure of performance.

While the proportion getting five A-C grades is up to 43.5 per cent this year from 43.3 per cent last year and 41.1 per cent the year before, the percentage who fail to get even one pass is up from 7 per cent two years ago to 8.1 per cent.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "There is already evidence that the 'long tail of underperformance' will lengthen for those who cannot achieve pass grades. This would be an unforeseen yet highly damaging consequence of league tables in their present form."

Peter Kilfoyle, Labour's schools spokesman, said: "There is a twofold gap between the top and bottom 20 per cent of GCSE results. We clearly need to do more to level up the standards of those getting low grades or no grades."

Headteachers are critical of the way in which the tables are compiled. Bruce Douglas, principal of Branton Community

College in Lincolnshire, said: "The results depend on the clientele. The tables amount to almost wilfully misleading the public by giving a raw score and calling it performance."

Ministers have commissioned work on "value-added" tables which would compare a school's performance with its intake.

The top comprehensives include schools such as the Liverpool Blue Coat School which have been accused of partially selecting their pupils by interview.

The bottom comprehensives include Battersea Technology College, in the Conservatives' favourite borough, Wandsworth in south-west London, where only 1 per cent of pupils gained five or more top passes.

This year's figures show that truancy has risen slightly from 0.9 per cent of half days missed through unauthorised absence to 1 per cent. Authorised absence was up from 8.1 per cent to 8.2 per cent. However, headteachers say that these figures are meaningless because children who play truant may bring notes from their mothers while those who are ill may not.

They also attack the way in which a school's position in the tables can fluctuate sharply from year to year, sometimes for no apparent reason. Archbishop Tenison, a grant-maintained school in the south London borough of Lambeth, which has just received permission from Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, to become selective, last year had 17 per cent of pupils with five A-C grades at GCSE. This year it has only 1 per cent.

Even the performance of one pupil can make a difference. The City of London School for Girls said that the failure to include a single pupil's maths result at A-level had meant that it was 62nd rather than 53rd in independent schools league tables published earlier this year.

Full tables: Section Two supplement



Room for improvement: Pupils at Northcote School, Wolverhampton, which has recovered strongly after being failed Photograph: Mike Sharp

Criticism inspires comprehensive success

Analysis

"Excellence for Everyone" is the slogan at the Northcote School in Wolverhampton. The staff at England's first comprehensive to be officially failed by schools inspectors are nothing if not ambitious.

Yesterday the efforts of the school, where poor buildings, litter, vandalism and broken windows were found to put both education and health at risk, have paid off.

Pupils were called to special assemblies to be told that education ministers had given their school a clean bill of health. And that was not all: league tables published today show that its GCSE scores have almost trebled since 1991.

When inspectors from the Office for Standards in Educa-

tion, Ofsted, visited Northcote in November 1993 its head teacher had been in the job just six weeks and its chairman of governors, Fred Preston, was also new.

Instead of greeting the judgement with anger and resentment, as some schools have, they welcomed the findings and viewed them as a helpful pointer to the way ahead.

"Our view was that we were going to become one of the best schools in Wolverhampton, even the best. Now the school is a different place," Mr Preston said.

Yesterday he addressed three

gatherings of delighted pupils. The atmosphere was much warmer than three years ago, he said, and there was a "buzz" about the school.

In 1991, just 8 per cent of Northcote's pupils gained five or more A-C grades at GCSE. This year the figure had risen to 23 per cent, a respectable score for an urban comprehensive. The proportion staying on at 16 multiplied almost fivefold from 8 per cent last year to 38 per cent this year.

In a bid to improve the school, staff and governors rewrote the timetable so that pupils spent more time studying the subjects which Northcote did best. Modern languages and English were given a boost, while music and

humanities were cut back. Four members of staff took voluntary redundancy.

At the same time, the school's finances and management were overhauled. A decaying music wing and dining hall were pulled down, and the site was cleaned up.

When the Ofsted inspectors returned, they found effective leadership, good behaviour, a much-improved site and teaching which was satisfactory or better in three-quarters of lessons.

The school is an orderly community; it is now a welcoming place where adults and pupils treat each other with mutual respect," they commented.

Yesterday the schools minister, Robin Squire, praised the

hard work of its staff and governors.

"Northcote's success provides a challenge to all other schools requiring special measures to pull together and ensure that their pupils get the education they deserve," he said.

An adult literacy scheme run by the school has been declared to be probably the best in the country, but Mr Preston says progress must continue. Future projects will include an upgrade of the sports facilities and further efforts to improve exam performance.

"You never stop, do you? There's always some way you can get better," he said.

Fran Abrams

Top 10 most improved state schools

Biggest increase - 1994-95 - in percentage of pupils gaining five or more A-C grades at GCSE

St Francis Xavier, Richmond, North Yorkshire	29-61
Neadswood School, Southampton	50-75
St Saviour's and St Olave's, London	17-42
Trinity School, Bevedere, Kent	11-35
Golborne High School, Warrington	21-45
The Warwick School, Redhill	35-58
Whitecross High School, Hereford	16-39
Samuel King's School, Alston	40-63
Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted	37-59
Filey School, Filey	27-49

Bottom 10 comprehensives

Percentage getting five or more GCSEs at A-C

Amy Johnson School, Hull, Humberside	0
Parkside School, Plymouth, Devon	0
Benjamin Gott High School, Leeds	0
Battersea Technology College, Wandsworth	1
Archbishop Tenison's, Lambeth	1
Pope John Paul RC, Liverpool	2
South Halifax High School, Calderdale	2
Campion Boys, Liverpool	2
Lea Mason CofE School, Birmingham	2
Fairfax Community School, Bradford	2

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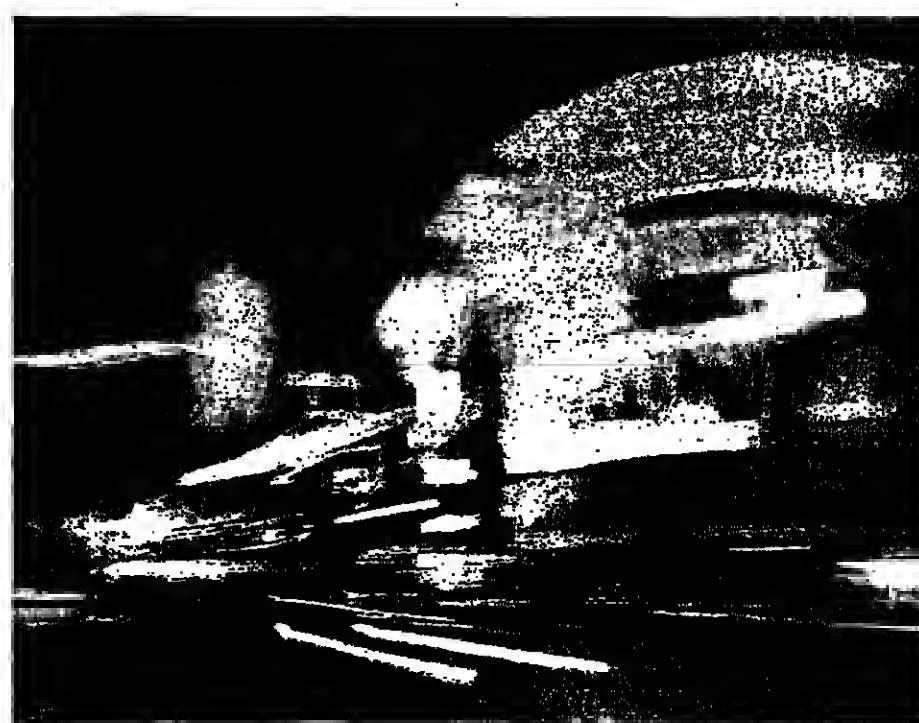


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news

Speed zones: Norris considers introducing 10mph limit on roads to reduce the number of accidents involving children

Minister aims to reclaim the streets

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR and
GLENDA COOPER

Zones with 10mph speed limits could be introduced into residential areas if it could be shown that they would reduce road accidents, Steve Norris, the minister for road safety, said yesterday.

Speaking at a conference in the City of London, on Play in the Streets, Mr Norris said: "If 20mph zones can be made to work, why not consider lower limits still." However, he warned that preliminary studies on such zones in the Netherlands suggested that they may be less effective than 20mph zones in reducing accidents because "children were confused" about cars going so slowly.

Nevertheless, he would look at the idea because 20mph zones had been shown to be effective in reducing speed and accidents. There are already more than 200 such zones in Britain and Mr Norris said regulations governing their design are being relaxed so that local authorities can introduce more.

A spokeswoman for the Automobile Association said it supported the idea of 10mph zones "in relevant areas such as roads without adequate footpaths". However, she said that roads would have to be cobbled or designed with chicanes to slow the traffic, adding: "You can't just stick up a 10mph sign and expect it to be obeyed."

The conference, organised by the National Children's Bureau and the National Voluntary Council for Children's Play,

called for the streets to be reclaimed as areas in which children could play by examining ways of redesigning streets and curtailing traffic. While streets used to have several functions as spaces for walking, cycling, and playing, they have now become through ways in which the sole function is to play host to speeding traffic.

According to Dr Mayer Hillman, of the Policy Studies Institute, children have become prisoners in their own homes, trapped by their parents' fears about the dangers of traffic. In 1971, 80 per cent of 7 and eight-year-olds were allowed to go to school without adult supervision. By 1990, this had fallen to 9 per cent. The issue was not just about road accidents but about long-term health. "Already 450 people die every day from coronary heart disease. Because children are not allowed out to walk or cycle, they develop a sedentary lifestyle. It is a time bomb that will explode in terms of death rates in 20 or 30 years' time."

Road accidents are the biggest single cause of death for children up to the age of 15.

But, according to Rob Wheway, a traffic consultant, we are killing our children. "We will kill them in early middle age through heart and lung disease because they are not getting healthy exercise that they should get in their formative years. If children are prevented from walking and cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle, they are unlikely to start these activities in adulthood," he said.



Street games: Children playing on streets is a rare sight. Many are kept indoors trapped by parents' fears about the dangers of traffic. Photograph: Edward Webb

Woolwich
'told of
safety
fears'

A woman posing as the building society manageress Carol Wardell rang senior officials to discuss safety fears three days before she was murdered in an apparent robbery, a court was told yesterday.

The woman phoned the head office of the Woolwich Building Society to report a stranger hanging around the branch Mrs Wardell managed in Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

David Smith, the customer relations controller, told Oxford Crown Court that the woman, who introduced herself as "Carol from Nuneaton", asked his advice about security and whether she should call police.

Mr Smith, who had never met Mrs Wardell, went on holiday and only learnt of her murder two weeks later. He told the jury that he then "gradually realised" Carol, or someone purporting to be her, had rung him a fortnight earlier.

After watching training videos featuring Mrs Wardell, he confirmed hers was not the voice he heard in the four-minute phone call. Mr Smith was giving evidence on the third day of the trial of her husband, Gordon, Mr Wardell, 42, denies murdering his 39-year-old wife at their home in Morden, Warwickshire, on 11 September last year, before taking a raid at her building society to make it look as though she had been killed by robbers.

Mr Smith, who worked at the society's headquarters in Epsom, south-east London, described the phone call which he received at 12.10pm on 8 September. He said: "She introduced herself as Carol from Nuneaton. She went on to say she was worried about the fact that someone was hanging around outside the front of the branch and was worried about security and the public relations aspect of reporting it."

"I told her 'Don't worry about that. The security of yourself and the staff is the most important thing. Ring the police and don't worry'. The case continues today."

Supermarket chain will urge shoppers to keep it green

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

A new green supermarket chain opened its first branch yesterday with the aim of persuading people to shop for a better world.

The Out of This World chain, financed by 2,000 small and environmentally-minded or socially concerned investors, has

established its first shop in Bristol. A second will open in Gosforth, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, next month with seven more to follow by the end of next year.

Customers will be asked to become lifetime members of the cooperative which runs the chain for a £5 fee, although they will be offered an initial three month free trial. Yesterday

dozens were joining while more than 1,000 visited the shop.

"This is about trying to convert people's social and environmental concerns into choices about what they buy," said Richard Adams, the managing director. The membership scheme will make customers loyal to the shops and encourage them to express their views

about what should and should not be stocked.

Nearly three-quarters of the products on sale are food, including locally grown organic vegetables and "fair trade" produce brought from poor farmers in developing countries at an above-market rate, stable prices.

The remainder of the stock includes items such as paints

and cleaners with minimum environmental harm, beauty products and deodorants not tested on animals, arts and crafts products from the Third World, and wines and beers.

There are 3,000 different lines on sale in Bristol, a little less than half the number found in one of the new, compact urban supermarkets such as Tesco Metro.

Each store costs about £250,000 to set up and the existing investors, recruited mainly by magazine advertisements, have so far raised nearly £1m. The average investment is £400 and there are no bank loans.

If the stores flourish they will be reviving a green consumer movement which went into reverse after the heady days of the

late 1980s, when every major supermarket chain jumped on the green bandwagon.

Earlier this month a healthy eating and organic foods supermarket opened in Bayswater, London, run on commercial lines. Planet Organic hopes to open a second store in the capital next year.

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Don't you just hate it when people
think they are better than you?

Trivial Pursuit

it takes all sorts

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Fab Four finally come together in spirit for one last song

Mersey's new beat: Security was tight and tempers frayed at the launch of the first new Beatles single for 25 years

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

Security was tight. So tight that one frustrated European journalist at the launch of the first new Beatles music in 25 years yesterday shouted at the president of EMI: "This is not the Rosetta Stone. This is just a pop record that you are marketing."

His plea failed. Camera crews from all over the world were made to turn their backs as an exclusive video of the three surviving Beatles answering questions was shown.

The first double CD of Beatles' outtakes, demos and rejected songs was delivered to shops yesterday, after having spent the last few weeks literally under armed guard at the warehouse. Its highlight, "Free As A Bird", the first genuinely new Beatles song in a quarter of a century, was played for the first time.

Paul, George and Ringo failed to attend a press conference at the Savoy Hotel in central London to launch the new album. But they were there in spirit, or at least on video, to give their views on the Beatles' enduring popularity.

"We were cute," said George. "We certainly made some good records, and in our early days we were a tight little band. And we looked quite good at the time, which always helps."

He put into perspective the

frenetic pace of those years when he said: "When I was 17, I was in Hamburg. By the time I was 23 we had done *Sergeant Pepper* and I was in the Himalayas. We put 20 years into every year."

Ringo Starr said that impresarios were still offering the three £1bn to play a reunion concert. "They don't quite get the picture. There were four of us. One of the Beatle boys isn't there any more," he said.

The surviving members of the group used Jeff Lynne, a fellow musician, to produce their new single "Free As A Bird", in which they added their harmonies and music to a cassette John Lennon made in 1977 of him singing his composition to piano accompaniment. George Martin, who was the group's manager, said yesterday he was too busy producing the *Anthology* album, the first of three double CDs to accompany a television history of the group which begins next weekend.

The song has a clear Beatles sound to it, with harmonies reminiscent of some of the songs on *Abbey Road*, the last album they recorded back in 1969. It will be released as a single on 4 December.

Though a number of early songs and demos on the album are very poor quality, and though John Lennon once said that everything of worth was used on Beatles' albums, Mr

Martin defended the project yesterday. "I used to say that. But in the last year I have listened to every take of every track we have ever done. And I realise that maybe I wasn't right. Now I realise that some of the early takes may have had mistakes but they have charm and they are gorgeous. It's in the raw. It's warts and all. People are ready for it now. They wouldn't have been ready in 1970 or 1980," he said.

Derek Taylor, the Beatles' press officer, said the album was similar to a literary exercise. He said it was the "musical equivalent" of the *Churchill Papers*.

Mr Martin said "Free as a Bird" was "a super song. I like the way the harmonies move. I like the lyrics. I don't think it's as good as *Strawberry Fields*, which actually didn't get to number one, but I think it's much better than other number ones we've had. Having heard it now I wish I had produced it ... This will certainly be number one all over the world".



Yesterday: George Martin (left), with Jeff Lynne (centre) and Neil Aspinall at the launch of the new Beatles single Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

National Trust buys McCartney house



Beatles' 'birthplace': McCartney family's council house

A council house which was home to Paul McCartney's family and dubbed the birthplace of The Beatles, has been acquired by the National Trust, it announced yesterday.

The terraced house, 20 Forthlin Road in Allerton, Liverpool, was McCartney's family home for nine years, and McCartney and John Lennon used it for writing and rehearsing in their early days.

The family - Paul, his brother,

Mike, father, Jim, and mother, Mary - moved there in 1955, when Paul was 13, and stayed until 1964, when Paul bought his father a house on the Wirral.

McCartney said yesterday: "My mum would have been dead chuffed to think our little council house would end up with the National Trust. It's fantastic for me and our family."

The trust said it would not be possible to open the house to the public in the near future.

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politics

Labour plans a campaign to protect women from violence

Labour intends to put the spot over the Family Law Bill by trying to reinstate safeguards against domestic violence dropped at the behest of Tory moral fundamentalists.

Lord Irvine of Lairg drew a thin smile from Lord Mackay of Clashfern when he said the Opposition would be putting down amendments "to persuade the Lord Chancellor to agree with himself".

The Family Law Bill, containing proposals to end "quickie" divorces and require a cooling-off period as well as the water-down provisions on domestic violence, goes before the Lords for its second reading next Thursday.

It is expected to be the start of a turbulent passage through Parliament. A Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill should have passed in the last session but was held over after a group of Tory MPs protested that it would undermine mar-

riage by giving co-habitants the same rights as married couples. Opening the resumed debate on the Queen's Speech, Lord Mackay emphasised the cross-party support for the safeguards and skated over the backbench revolt. He has made changes of detail requiring

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

courts to take account of the fact that co-habitants had not made the same commitment as married couples. It will also be more costly for co-habitants to resolve property disputes.

But Lord Irvine, who would be Tony Blair's Lord Chancellor if Labour wins an election,

said the Government had succumbed "to a campaign of misinformation by a tabloid newspaper picked up by a tiny, unthinking minority in the Conservative Party".

Had Lord Mackay soldiered on he would have got his original Bill, he said.

The Bill will extend protection against molestation to former spouses and to people living in the same households. "It in no way gives the grasping mistress any greater protection than she enjoys at present. But it does protect against granny bashing or beating up a flat mate or a child."

The Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev John Waine, emphasised the need for adequate funding for the proposed mediation service. "At its very heart marriage is a loving, caring relationship," he said.

"When that relationship of trust and intimacy is in danger, it is not the legal bonds which need attention but the relationship

that they are designed to protect - the threat of marriage breakdown and its consequences for the children."

The Rt Rev Waine pointed out that when mediation was introduced in Canada, 19 per cent of those seeking advice decided on reconciliation.

A former member of the Security Service yesterday added his approval to the Bill enabling M15 to work with the police in the fight against organised crime.

In a maiden speech, Lord Cuckney, former chairman of Westland helicopters, said that M15, with its experience of counter-terrorism, could be deployed against organised crime and be "of benefit to the stability of the country".

But Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank, for the Liberal Democrats, wondered what the public would feel about "secret police operating on our streets, whatever the purpose".



Declaration of Interest: Anna Berry, a Hampshire probation officer, joining a lobby of Parliament by the National Association of Probation Officers to protest at the Home Secretary's plans for the service. Photograph: Edward Sykes

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With Repayment Protection	N/A	N/A	£71.40	£103.03	£137.38	£171.72	£206.07	£240.41	£274.76	£309.10	£343.45
Without Repayment Protection	N/A	N/A	£57.45	£83.52	£111.36	£138.20	£167.04	£195.88	£224.72	£253.56	£282.40
With Repayment Protection	N/A	N/A	£64.55	£92.19	£122.92	£153.65	£184.38	£215.11	£245.84	£276.57	£307.30
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Howard's asylum clampdown presses on

HEATHER MILLS and PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

Dismissing allegations of playing the race card, Michael Howard yesterday pressed ahead with controversial plans to deal with bogus asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.

In the face of widespread opposition the Home Secretary maintained: "Genuine refugees will benefit from reduced abuse of the asylum system."

And in an indication that he had overcome Cabinet opposition, yesterday's proposals included plans for criminal sanctions against employers who hire illegal immigrants.

The proposals will mean about two million people a year will have to prove their identities with a passport or birth certificate before they can gain work. The estimated cost to the country's 1.2 million employers is about £13.5m to set up a monitoring scheme and £11.5m a year to run.

Mr Howard also confirmed plans to introduce a so-called "white list" of countries regarded as safe and which are therefore unlikely to produce genuine asylum seekers.

Amnesty and other refugee organisations expect the list to include countries such as Albania, Bulgaria, the Ivory Coast, Poland, and Zimbabwe. But because there are so few applications from these countries, they expect the Government to soon add more countries where there is concern over human rights. These may include India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Zaire and Angola, some of which appear on other European Union countries' "white lists".

Mr Howard reassured MPs in a Commons statement yesterday, however, that Nigeria "is not and never has been" amongst the white list countries. Questioned by Sir Trevor Skeet, Tory MP for Bedfordshire North and an officer of the British-Nigerian all-party group

of MPs, over fears that genuine cases of asylum seekers would be affected, Mr Howard replied: "I have borne in mind the importance of doing nothing to imperil this country's honourable tradition of offering sanctuary to genuine refugees - that we should be a haven, not a honeypot."

Labour has said it plans to table a motion calling for the Bill to be studied by a special standing committee, forcing a vote after its second reading.

Jim Lester, Tory MP for Bromtome and chairman of the Africa committee on the Refugee Council, demanded some way of taking evidence to show "what we are seeking to do is fair, effective, and fulfils our international obligations".

There were signs, however, that a wider Tory rebellion might be crumbling, as Conservative MPs complained that Jack Straw, Mr Howard's Labour shadow, had refused to accept that abuse of the asylum procedure was a problem.

Mr Straw said Labour accepted fraudulent asylum seekers must be "weeded out" but demanded "cool examination" by a special committee to take controversy out of the issue.

The Home Secretary maintains he has been forced to act because of a huge increase in the numbers of people claiming asylum, up from about 4,000 a year in the 1980s to about 40,000 this year. Mr Howard said that only 4 per cent of those are initially granted asylum and only 4 per cent of appeals are successful. The outstanding number of asylum applicants is 75,000. "The scale of the problem is alarming," he said.

Refugee groups like Amnesty accept there are many false claims but say the figures are no where near as high as the Home Office suggests. It blames the Home Office for the backlog in processing cases and accuses it of failure to remove asylum seekers found to be bogus.

Lib Dems call for electricity rebate

A £130 electricity bill rebate for each of the 23 million domestic consumers is to be called for today by the Liberal Democrats in their alternative Budget, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

The party is also poised to vote against cuts in basic-rate tax in next week's Budget - unless the Government invests an additional £2.5bn in education on top of the already expected increase, which is likely to cover inflation plus 2 per cent.

The suggestion for a Monopoly Utility Rebate, or "rip off" rebate, stands in contrast to Labour's pledge of a windfall tax on all the privatised utilities, to go to the Treasury.

The Liberal Democrats will argue today that the rebate, totalling £3bn, should go directly to consumers. They calculate £130 per household - in addition to a £50 National Grid rebate to all consumers - based on alleged excessive profits made since privatisation, and say it should be limited to the electricity indus-

try because its investment needs are much lower than water's. Electricity profits are up 60 per cent in real terms since privatisation in 1990-91, with the companies making £10.7bn in profits in five years.

The party will also attack the long-term objective of Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, of a 10p in the pound starting rate for income tax. It will call instead for the lifting of 750,000 people out of tax and national insurance by increasing the personal allowance from £2,525 to £3,820, paid for by a 50 per cent marginal rate of tax on earnings over £100,000.

Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, told City and business supporters at the House of Commons last night that both the Government and Labour were engaged in a "shabby deceit" of the electorate. Labour's "casual" promises to cut income tax and VAT raise benefits and increase spending did not add up, he said.

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news

Labour urges BSkyB 'monopoly' inquiry

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

A senior Labour MP last night called on the Government to refer Rupert Murdoch's subscription-TV service, BSkyB, to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The move follows a campaign by UK cable operators to end what they call BSkyB's "abuse of its monopoly position" in the supply of pay-TV programming on satellite and cable.

In a letter addressed to Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, and copied to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, Labour's shadow spokesman on competitiveness and regulation, Richard Caborn, called Mr Murdoch's pay-TV monopoly "a serious threat to the development of the UK's broadcast and communications industry".

Mr Caborn complained that, despite complaints from the cable industry, the Office of Fair

Trading "seems unable to reach any final decision" concerning BSkyB's dominant position in the market place.

With the introduction of digital television, he added, "independent cable and satellite companies could be squeezed out of the market for new digital services and products, if BSkyB's stranglehold is transferred from the analogue to the digital environment".

Several cable companies, led by International CableTel,

Videotron and Bell Cablemedia, have lodged complaints with the OFT and with competition authorities. They claim that BSkyB's control of encryption technology used to scramble and unscramble broadcast signals, along with its long-term agreements for the supply of movies and sports, make it impossible to compete.

Specifically, the cable companies have complained that long-term supply agreements between BSkyB and the two

biggest cable operators, Nynex CableComms and Telewest, are anti-competitive, and had made it impossible for the cable industry to develop pay-per-view sports and film programming to compete with BSkyB.

The OFT said last summer that it had demanded changes in the agreements but has yet to announce the new contract terms.

BSkyB, which operates satellite channels and provides programming for cable through

contracts on an à la carte basis, had no comment last night.

The OFT spokesman said: "The contracts are very complicated, and we are still considering the arrangements." He added that there was no timetable for a decision, and that consultations continued.

The competition watchdog has already ruled on BSkyB's competitive practices, overturning arrangements between the satellite broadcaster and the US-based Disney Channel ear-

lier this month. The OFT had aimed to end the "bundling" of BSkyB's movie channels with Disney, and only available to subscribers who take both premium BSkyB services.

Although the bundling arrangement has been revised, the OFT said yesterday it continued to monitor the situation.

Earlier this year, BSkyB agreed to informal undertakings on the supply of programming to the cable industry. But many smaller companies complain

that the agreements have not improved competition.

Mr Caborn's intervention follows several high-profile complaints from senior media executives, including Channel 4's Michael Grade and Leslie Hill, chairman of Central Television, about the role BSkyB plays in the supply of pay-TV programming in the UK.

"My letter reflects my concerns about the lack of competition policy we have in this country," Mr Caborn said.

Funeral in Toxteth: Police hope that bloody cycle of street violence will come to an end with the burial of David Ungi

Fears as family bids farewell to inner-city legend

JONATHAN FOSTER

The family was believed to have spent £12,000 on the wake last night, a torrent of a send-off for David Ungi which police in Liverpool hope will drown the cycle of gangland vengeance which led to his fatal ambush.

Mr Ungi was gunned down in Toxteth in May. His funeral yesterday raised detectives' fears that the decorum of a requiem mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel church will be an overture to further settling of scores.

In their own inner-city patch, the Ungi family are nobility, evoking fear and deference.

The funeral will make working-class legend. Its cortege of 31 stretch limousines took five minutes to pass and had to be double parked before the church watched by a crowd of about 1,000 people.

More than 150 family and close friends stepped from the limos, their gold bracelets and sunbed tans conspicuous in the monotone of mean streets.

A flat bed lorry followed the procession, covered with flowers. Mr Ungi's three sons sent a 5ft high tableau depicting his picture and a dove. There were floral boxing rings, a boxing glove and titles - to "Dad", "Uncle", "Brother", and "Gent".

His mother, Vera, composed a memorial notice in the *Liver-*

pool Echo, turning her late son's name into an acronym: "D" for Distinguished, "A" for Admirable, through to "I" for Incomparable.

Not all the family could be at the graveside at Allerton cemetery, where all other funerals had been cancelled for the day. Two of Mr Ungi's six brothers are in custody charged with a violent reprisal, while an uncle and six friends joined them yesterday on drugs charges.

Police investigating Mr Ungi's murder named two men they wanted to question in connection with the attack, when two shots left Mr Ungi to bleed to death. Both men are believed to be in Jamaica.

The feud has so far led to 12 shooting incidents. Six people have been hurt, many more frightened. At the height of the violence, police cradled machine-guns as they patrolled the streets of Toxteth.

Vendettas had begun between Mr Ungi's entourage and rivals from nearby Grange when machismo was wounded, according to police. An insult in a pub named Cheers became a street fight, then a shooting, then a murder.

What happens after the wake will determine whether bloody jealousy will be laid to rest with David Ungi. In the meantime, all police leave has been cancelled.



Final journey: The funeral cortege for David Ungi, shot dead in a feud that has seen 12 shooting incidents in Toxteth, making its way to Allerton cemetery in Liverpool

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Vauxhall facing strike threat in battle over pay and hours

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The Vauxhall motor company was warned yesterday that it will face an overtime ban and a unilateral two-hour cut in the working week unless there is a substantial improvement in an offer on pay and conditions.

In the wake of a strike vote of almost four to one, union leaders have given management until tomorrow to improve its proposals. Vauxhall's manual employees have been offered 3.5 per cent this year with an increase tied to the inflation rate next year, but management has refused to concede a reduction in hours.

Union leaders said that if management did not address the claim, they would give the statutory seven days' notice of

disruption, with the company's 10,000 workers taking action from around 30 November.

Tony Woodley, chief negotiator for the motor industry at the Transport and General Workers' Union, said Vauxhall would at least have to match the offer from Ford, which gave workers a minimum of 9.25 per cent over two years, but which had been rejected by the union leaders.

Roger Butler, of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, emphasised the employees' claim for a reduction in the working week from 39 to 37 hours at the company's two plants at Luton and Ellesmere Port on Merseyside.

Bruce Warman, Vauxhall's director of personnel, said the company was "adamant" over its refusal to grant fewer hours

because it would mean a reduction in competitiveness. "We are absolutely determined not to reduce hours. It's fundamental to our position. It is not on the agenda."

The offer on pay was "fair", and would cost the company around 5 per cent in each of the two years. The package included an extra day's holiday and a new vehicle-leasing scheme. There was no room for manoeuvre, he said.

He registered his concern and disappointment about the vote in which 5,201 opted for strikes with 1,425 against. The vote for disruption short of walkouts was even larger at 5,971 to 684.

Bill Morris, general secretary of the T&G, said industrial action was inevitable unless there was a "substantial improvement" in the offer. "Our members feel very strongly. We will

have difficulty in restraining them," he said.

At Ford, union officials are consulting their members at the 13 plants over a two-part offer which gives 4.75 per cent in the first year, and 4.5 per cent on the inflation rate plus 0.5 per cent, whichever is greater, in the second. Officials are expected tomorrow to call for fresh negotiations, but some plant officials are enthusiastic about a deal on industrial action than others.

Ammunition for the unions came yesterday from the Industrial Relations Services research group which found few engineering firms had suffered as a result of cutting hours. Of 21 companies that cut hours as a result of a union campaign in 1989-91, two-thirds suffered no adverse consequences and a third reported it beneficial.

£500,000 theft case collapses

Two grandmothers charged with embezzling more than £500,000 from a firm of solicitors walked free from court yesterday after the Crown's case against them dramatically collapsed.

Eleanor Masson, 62, and Doreen Cruickshank, 55, denied stealing £572,778 from the Aberdeen lawyers Storie, Cruden and Simpson.

The Crown had claimed the cash was embezzled between January 1982 and February 1991, while the women worked as legal cashiers with the firm. But after only two witnesses had given evidence in the Aberdeen Sheriff Court trial - which began on 9 November and was initially expected to last several months - both accused were acquitted by Sheriff Kenneth Forbes, to gasps from the public benches.

The defence counsel in the case, Herbert Kerrigan QC and Edward Targowski QC, criticised the Crown for its "incompetence" during four years of compiling evidence.

The women were freed after the Crown was unable to continue its case because of difficulties in presenting evidence of bank statements under the Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act of 1993.

Sheriff Forbes rejected a Crown motion asking for the case to be deserted temporarily and for an extension until next April to allow the prosecution to change its method of presenting evidence.

Masson, of Burnieboozle Crescent, Aberdeen, and Cruickshank, of Gordon Court, Newmachar, near Aberdeen, showed no reaction as they left the dock, neither acknowledging the other. Lawyers for the Crown would not say if they would appeal, but added: "We are reviewing our position."

Melville Watson, a senior partner with Storie, Cruden and Simpson, later criticised the way the case collapsed. It is understood that the firm is pursuing a separate civil case against both women in the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

Carey summons rebel bishop

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has summoned one of his "flying bishops" to Lambeth Palace after he called on the Church to renounce female priests three years after the General Synod decided to ordain them.

The Rt Rev Edwin Barnes, Bishop of Richmond, is one of the three "flying bishops" specially appointed to minister to opponents of female priests.

In the last 10 years, female priests and their supporters have been compared to the Aids virus, to witches who should be burnt at the stake, and to an army of occupying Nazis. Those who used these terms were not laymen but priests, even bishops.

Their views would be shared by two of the three most senior bishops: the Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, and the Bishop of London, the Rt Rev Richard Chartres, both of whom have been appointed since the General Synod voted in No-

vember 1992 to ordain women.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has called some opponents of female priests "heretics". He later withdrew the remark, but it does seem to represent his opinion of those who hold that a woman can never be a priest, including the Rt Rev Edwin Barnes, who called at the weekend for a campaign to repeal the 1992 legislation.

All this is the sour fruit of a compromise hastily assembled after the Synod vote. The official doctrine is now that some women are priests, but no one has to believe even that women can be priests. The consequence is both sides feel betrayed.

So far, 1500 women have been ordained as priests. Yet stories from all over the country show that the women have the greatest difficulty finding jobs.

The opponents of female priests are organised by Forward in Faith, whose chairman, Fr John Broadhurst, over the weekend compared his enemies to a Nazi occupying army.

Ohio talks:
Bos



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Ohio talks: A settlement might end the fighting but with all three factions harbouring doubts over territory, it might not end the war

Bosnian leaders still balk at compromise

A bad peace is better than a war, said Bosnia's outgoing Foreign Minister, Muhamed Saitovic, last weekend. However, the question on everyone's mind at the Ohio talks on former Yugoslavia was whether the peace settlement taking shape was so bad that it might simply lead to another war some time in the future.

All three delegations – the Serbs, the Croats and the Muslim-led Bosnian government – made it clear during the three weeks of negotiations that they had serious reservations about the concessions they were being asked to make. Each had its reasons for considering the pro-

posed settlement a bad one.

The Muslims, doubtful that the deal would succeed in keeping Bosnia a united state in its pre-war borders, wanted stronger powers for the central government in Sarajevo than the settlement envisaged. They were also angry at having to accept Bosnian Serb control of almost all eastern Bosnia, especially the former United Nations-protected "safe areas" of Srebrenica and Zepa.

The Serbs disliked the fact that the settlement restored Sarajevo as a united city, with free movement of people in all areas. They wanted central Bosnian institutions to have

even less power than was outlined in the settlement, doubtless so that the Bosnian Serb zone – occupying 49 per cent of the republic – could establish the closest possible ties with Serbia proper.

As for the Bosnian Croats, they were outraged at the suggestion that they should cede Bosanska Posavina, a Croat-populated piece of land in northern Bosnia, in order to accommodate the Serbs' demands for a wider corridor linking their two slabs of territory in Bosnia. In a letter to the chief US negotiator, Richard Holbrooke, the Bosnian Croat leader, Kresimir Zubak, com-

plained that he had been excluded from negotiations on the maps and described the proposed settlement as "not satisfying even the most basic criteria of a just peace".

Ironically, the surrender of Posavina in exchange for more land for the Croats in western Bosnia was a proposal said to have originated in talks between Croatia's President, Franjo Tudjman, and Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic. With their eyes fixed on the wider Balkan picture, these two men have never flinched at the prospect of sacrificing certain interests of their respective clients in Bosnia. Yet even Mr Tudjman and Mr

Milosevic could not be entirely pleased with the compromises being hammered out at a military base in the American Midwest. One important agreement allows Serbs to stay in the Croatian region of eastern Slavonia, but it is difficult to believe that Mr Tudjman really wants people who launched an armed revolt against his rule in 1991 to keep a foothold on Croatian soil. Mr Milosevic is known to have protested at the insistence of the US – and the Bosnian government – that UN-indicted war criminals, including the chief Bosnian Serb and Croatian Serb leaders, should stand trial in The Hague.

This issue remained contentious throughout the Ohio talks.

The dissatisfaction of the three sides stems from a feeling in each camp that it may still be possible to gain more from fighting than from peace, if not now then in years to come. This is particularly true for the Muslims and Croats, who turned the military tables on the Serbs in dramatic fashion last summer and believe they could have pressed on to a convincing victory.

Mr Milosevic has a more pressing interest in peace, since it should cause UN sanctions on Serbia to be lifted. But this is not to say that either he or Serb leaders in Bosnia and Croatia

have ruled out the future use of armed force in pursuit of historic Serb national goals.

It is more likely that they view the wars of 1991-95 as one more chapter in the almost 200-year history of the national effort to bring all Serbs into a single state. This effort went catastrophically wrong last August with the elimination of the Krajina Serb community of Croatia, but the establishment of a Bosnian Serb political unit covering half of Bosnia is breeding hope that one day this area can be merged with Serbia.

For its part, Croatia believes it has unfinished business in eastern Slavonia and possibly in

western and southern Bosnia. In those areas, ultra-nationalist Herzegovinian Croats would much rather be absorbed into a Greater Croatian state than stay part of Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation.

The Ohio negotiations were difficult because each delegation feared it had more to lose than to win by talking peace. This was perhaps inevitable after a war that failed to produce a clear-cut victor and left all three combatants with an even stronger sense of justice on their side than when they started fighting. But it does not augur well.

Tony Barber



A boy waits outside a post office in Sarajevo to send parcels to family in the Muslim enclave of Gorazde. They are searched by the UN and then sent

How Nato force will attempt to police the deal

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The first Nato troops of the peace implementation force for Bosnia should be on their way immediately a peace agreement is reached. But it will take more than three months for the whole, 60,000-strong force to arrive. The plan is for them to remain for a year, though that could be extended.

The force will operate differently from the UN, which went into Bosnia to escort humanitarian aid and got out of the way when the local parties attacked each other. Nato's role will be to keep the warring sides apart, by force if necessary. It will have more "robust" rules of engagement allowing it to open fire if of the local parties breaks the cease-fire.

It is hoped there will be a two-mile wide demilitarised zone between the sides, although that will take time to establish, with Nato units deployed at key junctions and vantage points. However, the peace line will stretch for more than 600 miles across some of the steepest and most difficult country in Europe so, unlike the UN force, the Nato troops will make extensive use of helicopters.

The Nato plan divides the Bosnian pie into three roughly equal segments cutting across the present front lines between the warring factions.

In the first fortnight, the "enabling force" of about 2,000 headquarters staff from all Nato's 16 countries will arrive in Bosnia by air. They will include staff officers, signals troops, and engineers to set up the expanded headquarters needed by the force. Then the Nato corps commander, British Lieutenant General Mike Walker, will arrive in Sarajevo and take over command from the UN Protection Force, probably in early December.

At this time, those UN troops already in Bosnia who are being "converted" to Nato status will swap blue helmets for Nato camouflage. It will take another three months for the rest of the 60,000 to reach former Yugoslavia and deploy along either side of a four kilometre-wide demilitarised zone between the former warring factions.

The Nato planners' job has been complicated because they have not known exactly how the territory will be divided between the Serbs and the Muslim-Croat federation in the peace settlement. They have



had to work on the basis of the present areas of control. Although there were expected to be exchanges of territory, it has been assumed that the areas of control will not change greatly. Geo Walker's headquarters will be in Sarajevo, possibly at the Olympic stadium though that will require much further work before it is ready to receive

the 2,500-strong corps headquarters and supporting troops. The US 1st Armoured Division, based at Grafenwohr in Germany, will move in via Hungary with two brigades of tanks and Bradley infantry fighting vehicles and a brigade of Apache attack helicopters to monitor the northern area, based at Tuzla.

The French 6th Division, based at Mostar, will be responsible for the south east of the country, including Sarajevo. The headquarters of the British 3rd Division commanded by Major General Mike Jackson will be at Gorzki Vakuf, an area familiar to the British from three years as UN peacekeepers.

Security Council set to lift sanctions

DAVID USBORNE
New York

The United Nations Security Council was ready yesterday to begin unravelling the sanctions in place against all sides in the Yugoslav conflict when and if a peace agreement emerged from peace talks in Dayton, Ohio.

A first resolution was aimed at suspending indefinitely the economic sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro at the start of the war in 1992.

Also on the table was a resolution ending the arms embargo against the Bosnian government. Manoeuvres in the Security Council were being choreographed with the progress in Dayton. A first meeting to consider the two texts was held on Sunday evening, well before the outcome of the peace talks was certain.

By signalling the willingness of the UN to lift sanctions, Washington may have been looking to generate additional incentives for the governments of Serbia and Bosnia to overcome last-minute obstacles in Dayton and sign the accord.

The economic sanctions against Serbia would be suspended instantly and indefinitely on the signing of the peace agreement, diplomats said, although they could be reimposed just as quickly if Belgrade failed fully to honour it. All sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs would remain until it was firmly established that its forces had withdrawn behind "zones of separation" laid out in the peace plan. The suspension of the arms embargo on the Bosnians would be phased over 180 days.

The ban on the supply of heavy weapons would be the last to be lifted at the end of the six-month period. Because of procedural rules, neither of the two resolutions could be formally adopted until today.

A peace deal would also oblige the Security Council to consider winding up the UN's peace-keeping mission in the former Yugoslavia and handing over to the planned Nato force.

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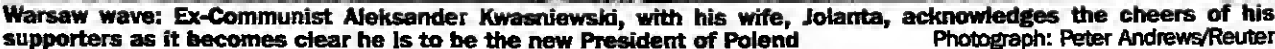
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'Moses of left' vows to lead Poles to unity

Although he was a member of the Communist Party from 1977 until it dissolved itself in

Mr Walesa, whose abrasive style alienated many of his former friends and allies, is now likely to try to unite the hopelessly divided centre and right in preparation for fresh parliamentary elections.



ANDREW GUMBEL

His refusal to discuss his future, either before or after the next general elections due in 1997, and his increasing reliance on his young wife Mimi, who heads his private office, have provoked a serious split within Pasok and the formation of an internal opposition movement that has been increasing-

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Rabin assassin 'trained'
Tel Aviv — The Shin Bet security agency's first investigation into the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin confirmed that the assassin, Yigal Amir, had tried to contact the Shin Bet agency before the attack.



Goula and Shilemo Amis Gubed
they attended their son's funeral

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EU rejects call for oil embargo on Nigeria

SARAH HELM
Brussels
and STEVE CRAWSHAW

The European Union yesterday rejected calls for an oil embargo against Nigeria - even while South Africa pressed for a stronger penalties against the regime.

European foreign ministers agreed to an arms embargo and a series of less drastic penalties

in response to the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others this month. Germany joined Sweden in supporting the imposition of an oil blockade but other member states called for a more cautious approach, deciding that further measures needed more examination.

In a statement, the 15 member states confirmed their commitment to maintain measures taken against Nigeria in 1993,

including a suspension of military cooperation and visa restrictions for members of military and security forces.

Strengthening the 1993 sanctions, the EU yesterday agreed to add new visa restrictions against civilian leaders in the Nigerian ruling council and federal executive committee and their families. The arms embargo covers all weapons designed to kill, and ammunition,

weapon platforms and equipment. It also covers spare parts, repairs, maintenance and transfer of military technology.

In South Africa, the secretary-general of the African National Congress, Cyril Ramaphosa, claimed that Britain was planning a freeze on assets and was "considering" an oil embargo. British officials were keen to downplay these possibilities, however, saying

that "we are not on to that yet".

At yesterday's meeting in Brussels, Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, expressed support for tougher measures. "I favour an oil embargo and a freeze of assets because these are the measures that would probably impress Nigeria," he said.

The Swedish Foreign Minister, Lena Hjelm-Wallen, also expressed support for the oil

embargo - but acknowledged that there was little support for the idea. "We are not satisfied, and want to go further," she said after the meeting.

South Africa, whose moral voice now perhaps counts for most of all, has notably toughened its stance from President Nelson Mandela's soft-soled approach, when the death sentence on Saro-Wiwa and the eight others was first announced, last month. Mr Mandela yesterday called for a regional summit of southern African leaders to discuss further measures to be taken against the military regime.

Carl Niehaus, a member of the ANC national executive, said that Shell's decision to press on with its huge natural-gas project in Nigeria was "deeply disappointing". Mr Ramaphosa said that he was

"disgusted and terribly unhappy" at Shell's decision.

President Mandela yesterday met the chairman of Shell South Africa, John Drake. Mr Niehaus said that Mr Mandela had "ruined very strongly the need for Shell to show its outrage about what was happening in Nigeria and then to place pressure on the Nigerian regime because of the economic power that it holds."

Tigers battle to the last in Jaffna

TIM MCGIRK
Colombo

After a month of fighting the Tamil Tigers, thousands of Sri Lankan troops yesterday advanced into the rebel city of Jaffna. A military spokesman in Colombo, however, said the government forces were one and a half miles from Jaffna's centre and had run into stiff resistance from the Tigers.

Even before the Sri Lankan army began its final assault on Jaffna, this was already a city disfigured by war. Two previous onslaughts against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - first by Sri Lankan forces in 1987 and then by Indian peacekeepers in 1990 - had ravaged the old colonial town.

Shells, bombs and mortar rounds had blown the heads off statues and ripped the wings off stone angels. Churches and once-grand libraries were destroyed; they look like bleached shipwrecks beside the glimmering Jaffna lagoon. Now, Sri Lanka's second-largest city is being convulsed by another round of destruction.

The defence minister, Anura Kumara Ratwatte, said: "The Tigers are destroying the town, knowing that they will soon lose it to us." Officials claim that over 320 soldiers have died so far in the assault while the rebels have lost more than 1,500 men.

Backed by tanks, artillery

harrages and air power, the government troops yesterday captured a key junction at Nallur, a 400-year-old Hindu temple surrounded by houses and coconut groves.

A military spokesman said 24 soldiers were killed along with 145 rebels when the government forces overran the Tamil Tiger bunkers. However, a communiqué issued by the LTTE claimed that 52 soldiers died in the fighting.

To slow the Sri Lankan advance, the Tiger rebels laid booby-traps so that the houses blew up when soldiers stepped inside. The explosions then allowed the rebels to mortar the oncoming troops with lethal accuracy. Officials said that by yesterday afternoon, the government troops had thrust in, forcing the rebels to flee from the Hindu temple crossroads.

In Colombo, Sri Lankan officials claim that Jaffna may fall within the next 48 hours. But the army's victory may be more symbolic than practical. Apart from the rebels, there may be only one soul left behind in Jaffna: a Catholic bishop who has refused to leave his mission.

The rest of the city's 300,000 inhabitants fled the Sri Lankan offensive and are huddled in refugee camps at the far end of the Jaffna peninsula. The Tigers are trying to prevent Tamil civilians returning to areas now under government control. The

"Voice of the Tigers" radio yesterday ordered refugees, hungry and feverish after three weeks of monsoon rains, to flee to the mainland, which is still under control of the Tiger chief, Vellupillai Prabhakaran. The rebel strategy is to let the government conquer the land but not its people.

The LTTE is fighting for an independent homeland in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka for the Tamils who are ethnically different from the majority of Sri Lankans, the Sinhalese. Since 1990 the Tigers have ruled Jaffna as a separate country, with their own courts, schools, postal service and rebel army led by squads of fanatical suicide commandos.

Some of the moderate Tamil parties in Colombo are urging Sri Lanka's President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, to declare a ceasefire against the Tigers, but the generals are counselling her to crush them. One pro-government daily, *The Island*, commented yesterday: "The only way out is to de-fang or kill the Tiger." To that end, a reward of a \$50,000 (£32,250) has been offered for anyone who tells the army where the elusive Mr Prabhakaran is hiding.

Vanquishing the Tamil Tigers is not easy, even when the Sri Lankan army conquers Jaffna. As a guerrilla leader, Mr Prabhakaran is reckoned to be a brilliant tactician, one who be-



On the attack: Sri Lankan troops fire a mortar as they step up their assault on Tamil Tiger forces around Jaffna yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

gules his commandos - many of them teenaged boys and girls - with propaganda on the nobility of dying in combat.

The Sri Lankan forces are finding out that trying to defeat the Tigers is like trying to hold water in a fist: as the government advances into Jaffna, the Tigers are vanishing into the jungles along the eastern coast. On Sunday, Tigers attacked an army patrol and killed 38 soldiers near Batticaloa, hundreds of miles from Jaffna.

IN BRIEF

FIS willing to talk peace with Zeroual

Paris — Only days after Lamine Zeroual was elected President of Algeria, the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) said yesterday it was prepared to discuss with him a peaceful settlement to the country's bloody civil strife. Rabah Kebir, the exiled FIS leader in Europe, said that the Muslim fundamentalist movement regarded Mr Zeroual as the *de facto* power in the country. In the clearest indication so far that FIS accepted direct talks with him, he added: "Mr Zeroual is certainly the valid negotiator to lead the talks on the side of the effective power".

Priebke leaves to face trial in Rome

Bariloche, Argentina — The former SS captain, Erich Priebke left for Rome to stand trial for his participation in a Second World War massacre of 335 civilians. The 52-year-old Mr Priebke was accompanied by Interpol officers and a military doctor.

Guerrillas offer to swap sick captives

New Delhi — Indian officials confirmed that separatist guerrillas holding four Westerners hostage in Kashmir offered to free two sick captives in exchange for a jailed militant. "It is true they are asking for a limited swap," an official said.

Pakistan holds Egyptian bomb suspects

Islamabad — Pakistan said it detained 13 Egyptian Islamic preachers after a suspected suicide bombing at the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad that killed 15. The Interior Minister, Naseerullah Babar, said police had detained the men for questioning as they were leaving after attending religious conventions.

Rabin assassin 'trained by Shin Bet'

Tel Aviv — Yitzhak Rabin's assassin was trained as a guard by the Shin Bet security service in 1992, shooting with pistols at the agency's firing range and attending lectures on protection practices, the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot* reported yesterday. The unnamed, Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot* reported yesterday. The unnamed, Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot* reported yesterday. The unnamed, Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot* reported yesterday.



Goula and Shlomo Amir outside court in Tel Aviv where they attended their son's remand hearing yesterday.

Clinton claims win in budget blame game

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Hundreds of thousands of US government employees were back at work yesterday, after a stop-gap budget compromise between the Democratic White House and the Republican Congress on Sunday, which left the basic conflict unresolved.

Hardly had the House and Senate agreed on a "continuing resolution" to fund government until 15 December than the search was on for winners and losers in the face-off that shut down the federal government for six days, the longest such closure in history.

For Republicans, there was the satisfaction of nailing President Bill Clinton down to a seven-year target date to balance the budget on the basis of figures provided by the Congressional Budget Office, rather than by the White House's office, with its long record of cooking the books. Mr Clinton, however, claims the Republicans blinked first, by agreeing that any final agreement will contain "adequate funding" to protect the federal health schemes Medicare and Medicaid, the environment and education. The White House says if the agreement does not measure up to these goals, Mr Clinton will simply wield his veto again. If the public continues to blame Congress for the shambles, the prospect will make Republicans shudder.

By extending funding until 15 December, the two sides have given themselves four weeks to thrash out what might be the most momentous advance

towards a balanced budget in decades. Half hidden by the same-calling of the last few days is a genuine prospect of a bipartisan understanding that would eliminate a deficit that reached \$160bn (£105bn) by the year ending 30 September.

To make that leap, the White House and Congress will have to make concessions in the hard bargaining that will begin after this week's Thanksgiving holiday, once Mr Clinton has received, and vetoed the current Republican bill mapping the route to a balanced budget with \$1,000bn of spending cuts over seven years.

To produce a version that finds the President's favour, the Republicans will be forced to scale down a planned \$245bn of tax reductions, a risky step for both Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole.

For the Speaker, backing down on tax cuts could cost him dear with the ideologically-driven Republicans who are his most devoted followers. Senator Dole, uneasy front-runner in the chase for next year's nomination, must avoid anything that suggests he is not a true believer in the "Republican revolution" set in motion by the party's victory in 1994.

Mr Clinton seems well ahead in the blame game. His spirited defence of Medicare appeals strongly to older Americans, who vote in larger numbers than other age groups. Polls show that by 49 to 27 per cent the public holds Republicans responsible for the impasse, and in a White House match-up, the President leads Mr Dole by 55 per cent to 39 per cent.

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The Poles have deposed Lech Walesa and shown solidarity with an ex-Communist. It could be a rough ride, warns **Neal Ascherson**

After the Great Electrician, more shocks

The lights went out on the Great Electrician when Sunday's presidential election in Poland brought defeat to Lech Walesa. For 15 years, since he created Solidarity in the Gdansk shipyard strike, he has been the decisive personality in his own country: as union leader, as prisoner, as leader of the mass political movement that overthrew Communism in 1989, as president of the republic since 1990. Now his own compatriots have rejected him, by a narrow margin, and the Walesa show – for the moment – is over.

Before Sunday's run-off election, one of the Polish bishops burst out that Poland would make itself scandalous and the laughing-stock of the world if this intensely Catholic country elected an ex-Communist "enemy of the Church" as president. But it is always unwise to lecture Poles from on high. They went and elected Aleksander Kwasniewski, junior minister in the last Polish Communist government within the Soviet empire, as head of state of the nation whose crest is a white eagle wearing the crown of the Madonna, Queen of Poland. And the world is not laughing.

For some Poles, this result must seem a catastrophe. It is not just that the post-Communists, who already dominate the government, now hold the presidency as well. Neither is it only the fear (groundless, on the evidence so far) that they will steer Poland back into some subordinate relationship with Russia. It is, rather, that the nation will be divided and polarised. In one camp will be the great pro-Western forces of traditional Catholic patriotism of which – in spite of countless quarrels and disillusion – Lech Walesa was a member. These forces will now be voiceless, or at least without any foothold in authority. Triumphant in the other camp will be godless modernisers and Marxists, placemen from the old Communist bureaucracy and traitors secretly in league with a reviving Russian Empire.

But this is not how the real split ran. Workers and small peasants voted about equally for Kwasniewski and Walesa in the first round on 6 November. So it was not about class – but neither was it much to do with faith or ideology. Kwasniewski's vote came from medium and small towns, from the northern and western regions annexed from Germany in 1945, and from the young and those with higher education. Walesa's supporters, in contrast, tended to live in the big cities and in the traditionalist south-east of Poland, to be older and to lack further education. Lech Walesa tried to turn the campaign into a fateful choice between Com-

munist and patriots. But it was nothing of the kind, and most Poles knew it. This was a social struggle, between an impatient, self-reliant Poland and an older, more deferential Poland whose values are still rooted in history.

There are many reasons why Lech Walesa lost his grip on the nation. Some of them were political. In 1990, before his first presidential campaign, Walesa coarsely and brutally turned on the Solidarity move-

ment in an effort to purge those who questioned his authority; the result was to split the whole centre-right of Polish politics and to deprive President Walesa of any solid and reliable block of support in parliament or outside it. His spectacular ham-handedness over constitutional change and the political command of the armed forces also alienated people. But the perception which probably pushed most waverers to vote against him on

Sunday was that a man so erratic was not right for the presidency. The lurid episodes when his bodyguard and chauffeur seemed to be running the presidency were painful for Polish dignity. His wildness and apparent lack of grasp shown in his TV duels with Kwasniewski on the eve of the election put off many voters, who felt that Kwasniewski had a better understanding of the democratic rules.

On the face of things, Poland and Europe do not need to worry about President Kwasniewski. On the main issues, the policies of his party and government are well-known and not very controversial. As president, he will push ahead with getting Poland into Nato and the European Union. The privatisation of the economy and its transformation into a free-market operation acceptable to Brussels will trudge ahead, though more slowly than some

international bankers would wish. In negotiating a new constitution, including a definition of presidential powers, Kwasniewski may well show more caution and tact in dealing with political opposition and the Catholic church than Walesa would have done.

And yet this election result still leaves a queasy feeling. Superficially, it poses no obvious threat to the five-year-old democracy, promises no striking turn in policy. But it is an odd outcome for Poland. Another period of "cobabitation" – of sharp political contrast between president and government – might have given a better picture of the passionate divisions in Polish opinion. After all, this was a very close result, and now the centre and right – almost half the political nation, including many of the new capitalist class – have lost all central power. That sort of result is familiar in Britain, with our

"winner takes all" electoral system. But Poles are more explosive, and less easily reconciled to impotence.

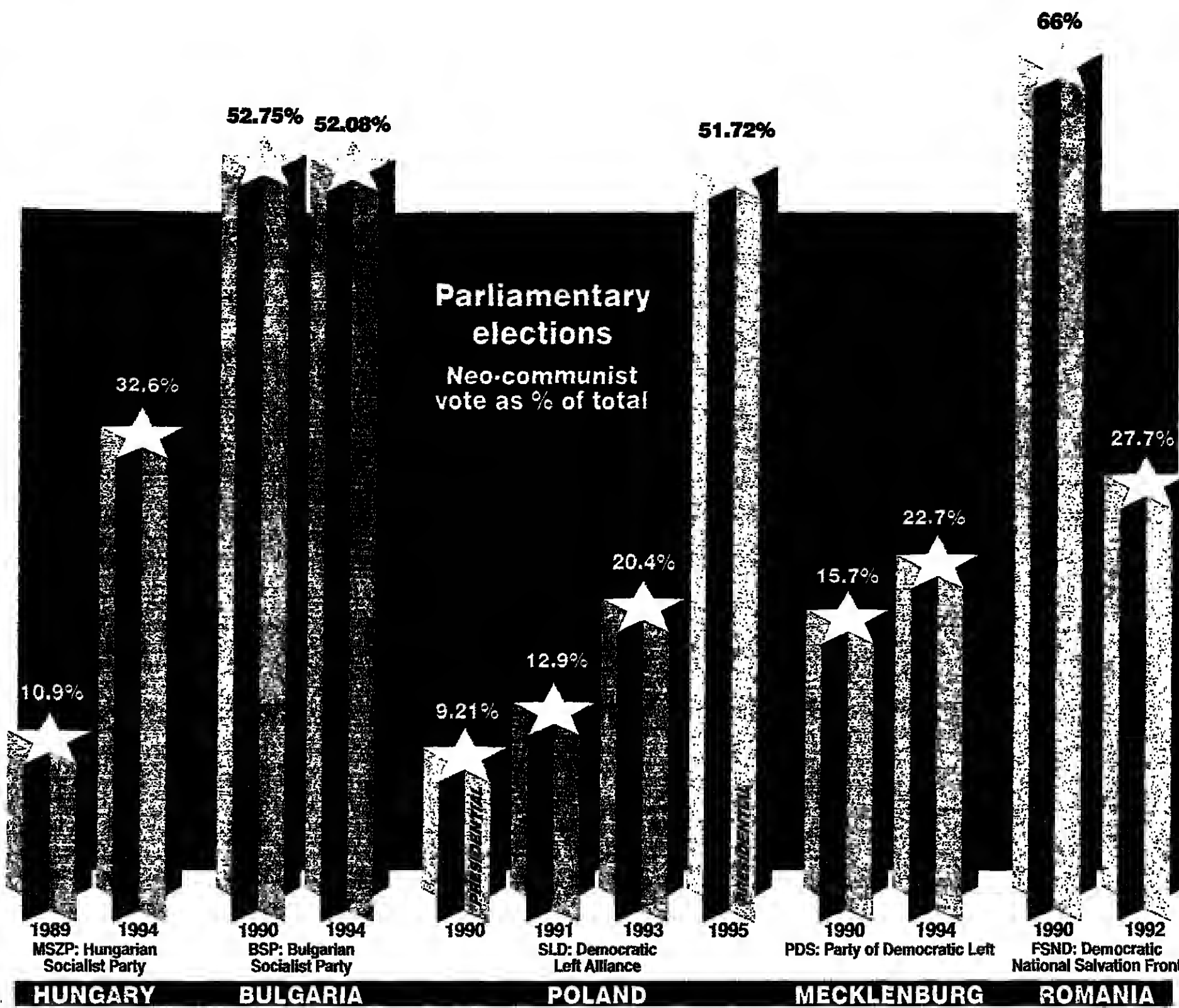
A second problem is Lech Walesa himself. In the past, he used to talk expansively about how happy he would be to lay down his burden, when Poland no longer required him, and go fishing with his tribe of children. In practice, there is some danger that Walesa will find rejection impossible to accept and will accuse history of not having learnt its lines properly.

His idol Jozef Pilsudski, who dominated Poland between the wars, "retired" to his country house at Sulejowek but used it as a centre of intrigue which made Poland almost ungovernable. If Walesa set up his own Sulejowek (or Colombey-les-deux-Eglises), it would probably be a farce. Just possibly, however, he could gather round him and unite the scattered forces of barny, authoritarian, bigoted nationalism. The picture of the Great Electrician's return as a messianic "man on a white horse" is not funny at all.

But, in the end, the danger of Aleksander Kwasniewski's victory is not chaos but its opposite: stagnation. It seems to be true that the younger and more vigorous Poles voted for him, impatient to turn their backs on recent history. They do not want any restoration of pre-1989 Communism, but neither do they want to pick over the rights and wrongs of the 50-year Communist period. The trouble is that recent history is alive and sitting behind many a desk. The victories of Polish "social democracy" since 1993 have restored old Communist hacks to their chairs all over the land, especially at local level. President Kwasniewski may want change and modernity. They do not, and they are sly enough to stay in power.

Post-Communism means different things in different places. With the Czechs, it is the party of state control and unemployed bureaucrats. In eastern Germany, it stands for the defence of regional identities; in Lithuania, for nationalism with a practical face; in Romania and Serbia, for state despotism in nationalist uniform. Poland, as usual, is different. There, post-Communism means the transition to capitalism at a humane pace.

It's a blameless policy. The new young president standing handsome beside his pretty wife seems too American to be true. But Poland's political tradition is not at all Americanised, preferring turbulence and collision to beaming consensus. My hunch is that the Kwasniewski presidency will turn into a rough ride.



Diary

DAVID LISTER

One of the more eclectic guest lists for an upstairs room at a west London pub features Lord Grade, Michael Caine, the rock star Bryan Adams and the writer Julie Burchill. What links them is a haze of thick, aromatic smoke.

They are all cigar smokers, some close, some not, and have been asked to be founder members of the Havana Room, a club for cigar smokers above the Comedy Store, run by Tom, son of Terence, Comran. The coterie is being started by the Comedy Store founder, Peter Rosengard. He has discovered the joys of fat cigars after smoking (anything) for the first time in his life earlier this year on the birth of his first child.

His wife, whom he describes as "an aggressive, North American anti-smoker", has ordered him and his Havanas out of the house. "I started the Comedy Store because I wanted somewhere to laugh. I'm starting the Havana Room because I want somewhere to smoke," he says.

Those who think that rugby league is a competitive and dirty sport have clearly never been to a super quiz. Tempers can fray, egos can be brutally damaged and friendships shattered. Even the soap opera *EastEnders* has featured a number of super quizzes recently, complete with fistfights.

But the antics of Albert Square pale beside a bruising super quiz which took place at the weekend to raise money for a centre for underprivileged young people based at Turville Heath, near Henley, the home village of John Mortimer and Jeremy Paxman. The two, along with a host of other celebs, including Sinead O'Connor and Peter Mandelson MP, took part in the quiz. Paxman indeed was quizmaster, but found his audience less respectful than *University Challenge* students. He asked for the longest one-word anagram in the English language: "Carthorse and orchestra, stupid," barked Sir Robin Day, having waited eagerly to put his successor in his place. But such banter was good natured compared with what was to follow.

The winning team turned out to be the one led by the bestselling novelist Robert Harris and Nick Hornby. This provoked a near riot. I am told, when angry losers pointed out an ethical dilemma. The questions had been set by Gill Hornby, wife of Robert Harris

and sister of Nick. One of the more disgraced was the writer Henry Porter who had added to his team of Carmen Calli, Christopher Hitchens and Anthony Holden by finding and signing up a former *Mastermind* winner. Even the dirty tricks brigade at the Queen Vic hadn't thought of that one.

The one intriguing aspect of the launch of the "new" Beatles album yesterday was the first public appearance in 33 years of the man



Old hat? Beatle-man Aspinall

dubbed the fifth Beatle, Neil Aspinall, brother friend of the group, road manager, and now head of Apple Corps. Aspinall has shunned all publicity for three decades, but yesterday, sounding remarkably like George Harrison, he showed he is not short of a quip. Asked if Yoko Ono had any more Lennon songs in her bottom drawer, he leered mischievously and replied nasally: "Who knows what Yoko Ono has in her bottom drawer?"

One factor above all marked Aspinall out as a Sixties rock star *manqué* – he wore a blue woolly hat to cover his baldness. While Nineties pop stars such as Right Said Fred and even Sinead O'Connor flaunt baldness as sexy, the Sixties brigade, including John Lennon in his later years, always cover their pates in shame. That a blue woolly hat indoors in the middle of the day might just draw attention to what fab folkies are or are not underneath never occurs to the true rock veteran.

Breakfasting with Alan Borg, the new director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, he gives his thoughts on the voluntary donations visitors are asked to give. They are "silly" and make people feel "uncomfortable" says the man who clearly prefers compulsory entrance fees. My own alternative to voluntary admission charges is simpler, and has never yet been tried at a museum. Instead of asking people to give money on the way in, ask them to pay on the way out. At least then they can give a verdict on their visit, and presumably will be inspired to give generously if they have had a good time.

One person who might be reluctant to cough up is the chap who told me that "the British art and design galleries are poor; the ceramics galleries are very poorly displayed; the Islamic gallery is appalling". I refer to Dr Borg.

My tale last week about the English National Opera's *Carmen* in which the diva playing Carmen lost her voice and had to mime to another *Carmen* on stage, seems to have been trumped since by the Munich Opera. In the

murder scene there Don José actually caught Carmen with his knife and drew blood. The German press had a field day the next morning with "Don José Really Stabs Carmen" headlines. I am delighted to learn that not only did the diva recover the next day but that she behaved like a true opera star and refused to speak to her leading man despite the blandishments of a dozen red roses. Carmen would have been proud of her.

A new James Bond, Pierce Brosnan, is introduced tomorrow with the premiere of *Goldeneye*, with audiences still wondering after all these years how he will shape up against Sean Connery and Roger Moore. But I was interested to learn that the first Brit to play Bond was not Connery but Bob Holness, the estimable, avuncular host of the TV quiz show *Bloobusters*, who played 007 on the radio in the Fifties. It must have been a blow to him when Saltzman and Broccoli overlooked him for the film role.

Holness lives near me in Pinner. I see him in the tea rooms sometimes. He may have missed out on the girls and the glamour, but I suspect that taking elevenses in Betjeman country is how Bond himself would have spent his middle years, the Earl Grey unshaken but stirred.



True 007? Bond-man Holness

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ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000/0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435/0171-345 2436

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The Windsors cannot win

For years this paper eschewed coverage of the Royal Family. But that was in the far-off days when royal coverage was invariably anodyne, deferential and inconsequential. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then. For sometime now the Royal Family has been lurching from one embarrassment to the next in a long-running trauma which, with each new incident, threatens to become a fully-fledged crisis of the monarchy fraught with important constitutional implications.

The process has been driven by the young royals and above all the failed marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales. With last night's *Panorama* interview, Princess Diana has intensified the sense of foreboding that now surrounds the House of Windsor. Many people, reflecting on last night's interview and the events of the last two or three years will be asking: where will it end? The answer remains unclear. The Royal Family is beside itself with anger about Diana's publicity *putsch*. It would dearly like to plunge the knife into her. Already the Palace has been dropping dark hints of revenge, against Diana, even against the BBC for staging the broadcast.

Even in its present weakened state, the power of the Palace should not be underestimated. But the path of revenge would almost certainly end in disaster. It should not be forgotten that this particular phase of the marriage was initiated by Prince Charles and Jonathan Dimbleby in a particularly ill-judged and short-sighted interview. It was a mistake of historic proportions. Diana is seeking revenge. Should the Royal Family respond in kind, then she will not stay quiet. She has an insatiable appetite for publicity and is a skilled manipulator of the media. This round will be followed by another and yet another.

This, moreover, is an unequal contest. The Palace may possess the heavier weapons, but these count for little. The

Royal Family has far more to lose than Diana: only her reputation is at stake, for the Royal Family it is Charles's succession, probably more. Each sordid round of this miserable domestic battle serves to diminish the Royal Family. There is another sense in which the Windsors cannot win. Media wars are essentially unpredictable, dangerous and futile. They are exercises of the information society not aristocratic hierarchy. And, dangerously for the Royal Family, the British like the underdog who, in this situation, is surely Princess Diana.

The Royal Family brought this state of affairs upon itself when it abandoned cocooned privilege for the role of soap opera and the world of showbiz. It is worth remembering that as recently as 1962, Anthony Sampson wrote in *Anatomy of Britain*: "The Palace has succeeded in maintaining not only wealth and dignity but also secrecy... this inaccessibility is the essence of the royal magic: in spite of the hundreds of journalists who have hunted for royal stories, no one yet knows how life is led in the royal palaces." RIP. Once abandoned there is no return.

If the Palace exercises due self-restraint, then it will minimise the damage that Diana's interview will inflict upon it. If, on the other hand, the Palace opts for revenge, then it is likely to hasten a constitutional crisis involving Charles's succession and, more generally, the remaining constitutional and political functions of the monarch. This may happen anyway. Indeed, the process of reform is under way with the Queen's decision to pay income tax and the removal of the minor royals from the Civil List. That is just the beginning. We do need a different kind of monarchy: smaller, more open, more accountable, less privileged, with a reformed constitutional role. How we get there matters. Sloze, dirt, grudge and bickering will do neither family nor nation any good.

The remaking of mice and men

Today, the European Patent Office in Munich will hear the final arguments about patenting a mouse - the "Harvard Oncomouse" - which has been genetically engineered to develop cancer. Meanwhile, earlier this week, it became clear that the US government has patented the genes of a triticum from Papua New Guinea.

These cases are landmarks for humanity's attitude to itself and the rest of the living world. It would be difficult to come up with less appealing standard-bearers than Oncomouse and PNG man for the brave new world of genetic engineering.

In 1984, scientists at the Harvard Medical School stitched "oncogenes" - genes known to provoke the development of cancer - into the DNA of laboratory mice. At first, the university's application to patent its "invention" was turned down: the European Patent Office ruled that animals are naturally occurring life forms which cannot be patented. But Harvard pursued its claim aggressively and in 1992 the EPO granted the Harvard Oncomouse a patent, sparking protest from groups across Europe.

Today's appeal will determine whether the patent is confirmed or withdrawn.

This is not a straightforward question of animal welfare. Nearly 3 million animal experiments were performed in British laboratories last year, some of them involving suffering comparable with or exceeding that endured by the onco-

mouse. Most of us can accept, albeit with discomfort, the necessity of such work. Few parents would put shampoo on their baby's hair without knowing that its low toxicity had already been proved.

But the commercial exploitation of animal suffering is different. That a great American university - which ought to be the seat of liberal and enlightened values - should be interested in making a fast buck out of marketing an animal predetermined to develop painful tumours indicates that something has gone far wrong with our calculus of moral standards.

The implication is also troubling that, by granting a patent, society can regard a living animal as an invention - a biochemical automaton which humanity can reprogramme as it wishes. Any biologist will tell you that there is little difference between a mouse and a man - if we regard animals as automata, can we avoid coming to the same conclusions about ourselves? The patenting of DNA from a man in Papua New Guinea, who enjoys a rare immunity to leukaemia, reinforces that concern.

The international biotechnology industry must, if only in its own interest, reassure us that genetic engineers are sensitive to public concerns as they exercise their new technical powers to alter DNA. The oncomouse case sends all the wrong signals. Not even Frankenstein tried to patent his creation.

ANOTHER VIEW John Broadhurst

Women priests: the tide turns

Bishop Edwin Barnes, one of the so-called "flying bishops", has created a furore by suggesting that the ordination of women as priests was an error. He claims it can and will be reversed, as this new ministry is being resisted in many parishes. Is this the last cry of an obscurantist or is there anything in his suggestion?

Women priests are not an innovation of this age and, contrary to common perception, they existed in the early Church among fringe, and often heretical, Christian groups. Much evidence for this has come from feminist activists who have failed to see the implications. The early Church grappled with the issue and rejected it as contrary to the gospel. The groups that propounded it either died out or discontinued the practice. The present debate has most of its force in a view that our world is in some way different from any other that preceded it. This is held with such force that even the words of holy scripture are no longer perceived as normative for Christians. This view will manifestly not stand the test of time.

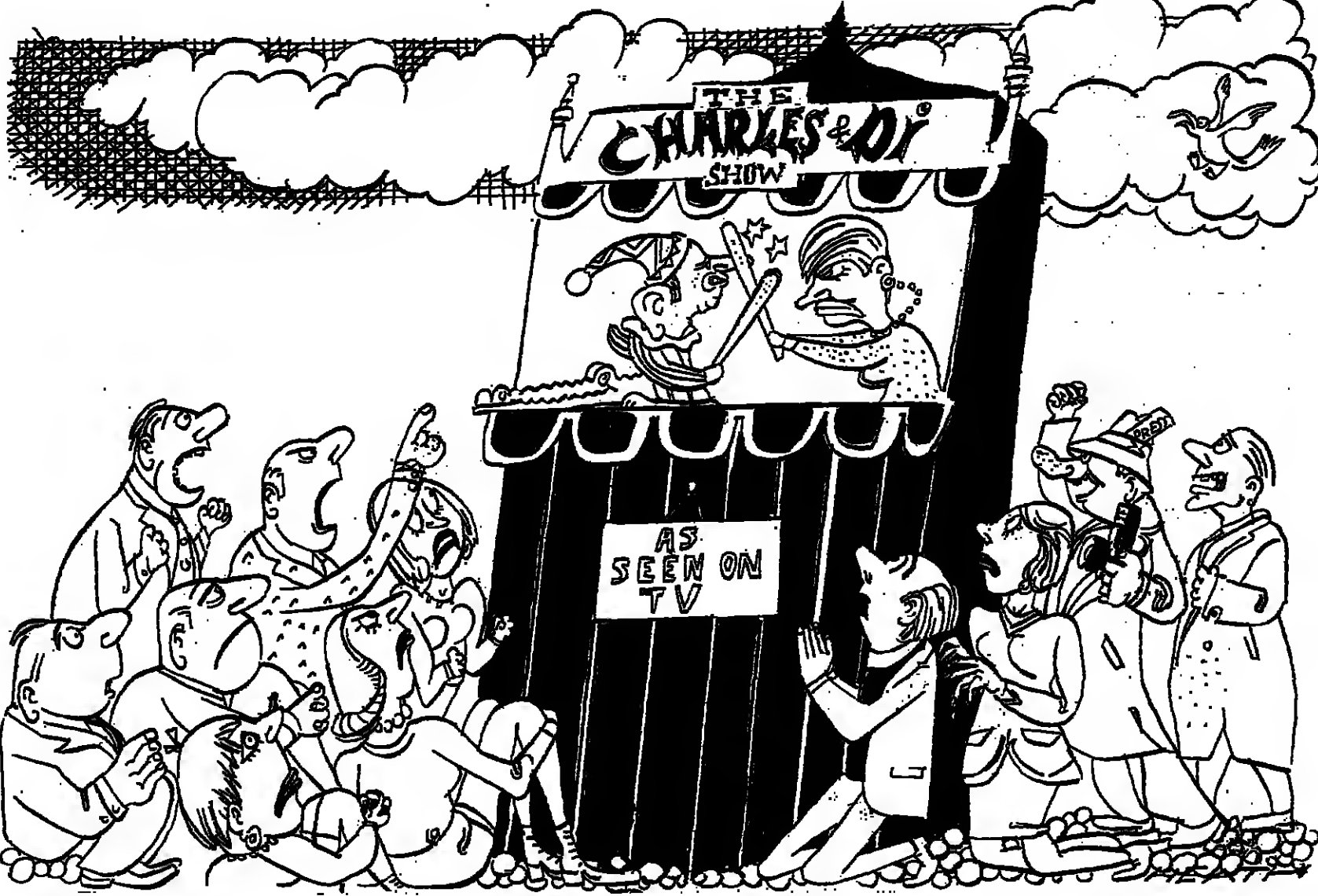
Bishop Barnes has to be right in his opinion, though if he believes it will happen in his lifetime he is sadly mistaken. The Church of God moves slowly. When feminism loses its political impetus it will still be fashionable among liberal Protestants. Being quaintly old-fashioned is part of the genre. Feminism is already moving away from the view that men and women are equal and interchangeable to a view that they are equal and different. Much is now

made of women's special gifts and intuitions. The unpollitised masses knew this, and it is what the Church has always taught. In time the Anglican churches that ordain women priests will, as in earlier history, either repent or die out.

Other evidence does not sugar well for women's ordination. Around the country I hear stories of bishops who only voted for it because they thought it would fail and didn't wish to be part of the acrimony. Many of the supporters of women's ordination are not happy. Likewise there is evidence of disillusion among women priests. In Sweden I have met some who have resigned and joined the opposition, now thinking it a great error. In England one of the first women deacons elected to Synod in a special constituency became a Roman Catholic, as did one of the women ordained priest in the Church of Ireland. Many women priests talk of "pain and rejection" and I genuinely feel sorry for them, believing they are in an impossible position. There is also the fact that many radical feminists have rejected Christianity as contrary to their convictions. Feminist post-Christianity is a real force, and, I believe, the logical end of feminism.

The difficulty for Church of England traditionalists is that they will not have the luxury of seeing history's judgement upon us. Are we simply old-fashioned fools, or prophets? If history repeats itself we are the latter, if not, may God forgive us.

The author is chairman of Forward in Faith.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Marriage of Major and Blair

From Mr Simon Partridge

Sir: Your editorial about John Major's proposals to reshape the Union ("Reshaping the Union, the McMajor way", 18 November), claims that the "case for a Home Rule parliament is irresistible on moral grounds, and may become so on practical and political grounds". Yet, your assertion is difficult to square with the latest opinion poll evidence from Scotland.

A devoted parliament comes a fair way down the wish list of Scottish voters - behind employment issues and better provision for health and education. How are we to explain this paradox?

It seems likely that two separate issues are being conflated here - the politics of territory and the politics of ideology. But if we are to effectively "reshape the nation state", as you rightly call for, I believe it is essential that these two issues are properly distinguished.

The political centre of gravity of the non-south-eastern portion of Britain is essentially centred left. It should be obvious by now that you cannot rule the UK indefinitely from a neo-liberal perspective based on a parliamentary majority - but not a

majority of voters - drawn essentially from the South-east. The UK is not a nation of immigrants like the United States, and one of the results of the continued Ginghamisation of our policy will be to disaggregate the kingdom along territorial lines.

The great irony is that what the present Tory Party is likely to achieve by its misconceived economic policy, new Labour is likely to achieve through its ill-thought-through proposals for national devolution for Scotland and Wales, since nobody has yet explained how this will not ignite the slumbering English national resentment - the infamous West Lothian question.

Is there any way of marrying McMajor's sensible proposals for constitutional reform to Mr Blair's fair-minded proposals for the economy and taxation? The alternative would seem to be a period of considerable economic and constitutional chaos. Perhaps the time is not far off for a coalition government of the sensible centre, which would include the remaining one nation Tories. Yours faithfully, SIMON PARTRIDGE London, N2 20 November

Less homework, more development

From Ms Jane Akister

Sir: With regard to your article "11-year-olds shun homework for TV" (17 November), what is homework?

The research reported, in common with other recent reports on this topic, fails to consider the range of activities undertaken by children outside school that are furthering their skills development. These include music lessons and practice, dance and drama lessons, gymnastics, swimming lessons, football training and scouting activities, to name a few. They all offer opportunities for children to develop fitness, co-ordination, ability to focus on goals, team spirit and commitment.

I am sure that many children watch too much television, but I think if you take a wider view of learning, you will find many chil-

dren at primary school do at least an hour of "homework" a day. Many schools expect children to read each night. Most children do not consider this to be homework. This is as it should be. We need children to develop skills and maintain interest. If children are set homework at too early an age, it becomes something the parents do. It also often becomes a battleground. Formal homework should not be set until children are able to organise and manage it independently.

Perhaps the National Foundation for Educational Research, David Blunkett and others could take a more constructive view of learning - encouraging and valuing extra-curricular activities, rather than seeking to extend the ordinary school day. Yours sincerely, JANE AKISTER Senior Lecturer Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge CB1 3PQ 17 November

Defence threat

From Ms Gill Samuel

Sir: The letter from John Alderson (20 November) misrepresents the speech made last week by the Defence Secretary to a tri-service conference. He made no mention whatsoever of armed forces tackling "inner-city crime". Mr Portillo's speech was on the theme of how the world may change in future and the threats that might arise to our national security. One such threat, he said, might come from drug trafficking or international organised crime.

The armed forces already assist the customs authorities in intercepting drug traffickers. His point was simply that use of defence resources in that way might become more necessary in future to combat these international threats to national security. Yours faithfully, GILL SAMUEL Press Secretary Ministry of Defence London, SW1 20 November

Adam's animals

From Sister Millicent Olga

Sir: The concept of animal rights surely dates back further than 200 years (letter, 15 November). One has only to open one's Bible at the beginning, Genesis, to discover that God created all living creatures and blessed them, and saw that this creation was good. He gave man dominion over them all, not to exploit them, but to look to their well-being. Food provided for human beings did not include the killing and slaughtering of animals. Yours faithfully, MILICENT OLGA Community of St Mary the Virgin Wantage, Oxfordshire

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Prozac and Ecstasy: the risks

From Mr Robin Prior

Sir: In her letter yesterday (17 November), Joanna Nakiely, the spokesperson for Lilly Industries, said that Prozac, one of her company's products, is not a "street drug". She said that it is different from street drugs such as Ecstasy because it has been subjected to "rigorous testing in clinical trials".

In fact, Prozac is the recreational drug of choice for many people, and the testing Ms Nakiely refers to was rather less than rigorous. The distinguished psychiatrist Peter Breggin, in his book *Toxic Psychiatry*, says of the testing of Prozac:

"The Prozac scientifically controlled testing trials lasted a mere five or six weeks. He also points out that there are a growing number of voices, particularly in the US, counselling caution towards this drug following reports of worsening depression, a number of suicides, and some violent outbursts among those taking it."

Some drugs are curative; some are fun to take; and some are both. But no agent of such potency as Prozac or Ecstasy is safe. There will always be risk, as the case of Leah Betts has tragically shown. Whatever side of the argument we might be on, let's not pretend otherwise. Yours sincerely, ROBIN PRIOR London, E8 18 November

From Miss Erica Curtis and Miss Katherine Bishop
Sir: Peer pressure pushes young people under 20 into doing things

Children have the most to lose

From Mr Bill Linton

Sir: Thank you for launching your "Children of War Appeal" (18 November). Children in a war zone are always the most vulnerable, and have the most to lose; you only get one childhood, and one chance to develop normally, both physically and mentally. You also only have one set of parents.

It was for this reason that the final Declaration of the 1990 World Summit for Children included, as one of its seven major goals, "protection of children in especially difficult circumstances, particularly in situ-

ations of armed conflict". Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child from the same year says much the same thing. Almost every state has signed up to both of these documents, and almost all have also ratified the convention.

Clearly, the protection of children caught in the middle of a vicious civil war is particularly difficult, but now that the war is (hopefully) over, it would be a good time for the world's statesmen to start making concrete plans as to how they are going to fulfil these obligations which they freely entered into.

Yours faithfully, BILL LINTON London, N13 20 November

Leah Betts would not have died in vain if young people learned the lesson and started their own anti-drug campaigns among their peers. Yours faithfully, ERICA CURTIS KATHERINE BISHOP Westwood St Thomas Sixth Form Publishing Group Salisbury, Wiltshire

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The royal precedent

From Mr Nicolas Walter

Sir: If Niall Ferguson ("Off With Her Talking Head", 20 November) teaches history at Jesus College, Oxford, he should know better than to say that Henry VIII got a divorce from Catherine of Aragon or that the Church of England was invented to let him do so. What he got was an annulment, like that from Anne of Cleves nine years later; and what happened to the Church of England in the 1530s was not that it was invented, since it had existed for several centuries, but that it was separated from Rome. Nor is George IV a good precedent for the divorce of a monarch, since his marriage to Caroline of Brunswick was bigamous. A better precedent is George I, who divorced (and imprisoned) Sophia Dorothea of Celle 20 years before he became king.

Niall Ferguson reminds us that in the old days Diana would face execution for her public conduct. So would he, for his public discussion of it. Yours faithfully, NICOLAS WALTER London, N1 20 November

From Mr Anthony G. Meadows
Sir: Why does David Aaronovitch say: "Charles is not just a troubled prince, but a modern male, confused, upset, clumsy, uncomprehending - as emotionally retarded as the rest of us" ("Another ripping royal yarn", 16 November) when, for years, reports on the lifestyles of Charles and Diana have shown them to be different in outlook and temperament?

The royal couple, like many couples I know, have reached a stage of unresolvable incompatibility, but this does not necessarily mean that Charles, or any other modern male in a similar position, has the inadequacies Mr Aaronovitch describes. Yours faithfully, ANTHONY G. MEADOWS Loughborough

Pay and displays

From Mr Michael McGwire

Sir: Peter Foster's suggestion (letter, 18 November) that museums should charge by the time spent on the premises could be met by the car-park system, when you take a timed ticket on entry and pay on departure.

If payment is to automatic machines that dispense an exit permit in return, this minimises congestion, while still allowing differential pricing according to time of day, day of week, or category of visitor. Yours faithfully, M. K. MCGWIRE Durlston, Dorset

House of rascals

From Ms Sally Lewis

Sir: Lottie, aged two and a half, watched the state opening of Parliament on television and asked if the lady in the crown was "the Queen of the castle". Assured on this point, the discerning child then pointed to the MPs streaming in from the House of Commons and declared: "So there are the dirty rascals!" Yours faithfully, SALLY LEWIS Saltham by the Sea, Cleveland

0171 293 2056

Steady hands can defuse a bombshell

Gordon Brown's tax proposals could signal the beginning of a genuinely new Labour economics

The mists are clearing. Amid the new Labour rhetoric and the name-calling among economists one big fact stands out from the past few days. Progressive taxation is back. Gordon Brown's proposal to cut taxes for the poorest workers is only the start. Unless the English language is in terminal decline, fair taxes must mean higher taxes for wealthier Britons.

What Labour is trying to do is to win the propaganda war it lost in 1992 before the next election campaign gets going. Last time, Labour's tax plans would have meant most people paying less; but the higher paid would have been hit hard. The Conservatives, however, persuaded the country that most ordinary people would be hit by "Labour's tax bombshell".

Shadow Cabinet people tramping round doorsteps were confronted by low-paid or even unemployed voters who were convinced that a Labour government would require higher taxes from them. It shook them rigid. It reminded them of what they ought to have known all along, which is that opinion formers are well paid and voters are mostly innumerate.

So now we have Brown the tax-cutter, the VAT-slasher, the enemy of income tax. This time round, Labour is trying to get the good news in first, to imprint so firmly in people's minds the idea that the poorer will be taxed less than not even the combined might of Conservative Central Office, Maurice Saatchi and the Daily Express will be able to shake it.

Then, and only then, will the infinitely more sensitive issue of higher-rate taxpayers be addressed. But it will

be. One piece of unequivocally good news is that Labour has decided it cannot try to hide its plans. Tony Blair's promise to "say what we mean and mean what we say" necessitates the great gamble of being honest with the public.

One of the great ironies of Labour's new tax position is that it was made possible by Norman Lamont's last pre-election Budget, in which he wrong-footed the Opposition by introducing a new, low-rate, 20p income tax band. It is this Gordon Brown now wants to halve. Having done so, he would have the bottom steps of a taxation ladder - 10p, 25p and 40p - which would then surely be extended upwards.

Tony Blair has recently promised that there will be no penal taxation for higher earners or entrepreneurs. The Brown team say they are equally against ridiculously high taxes for the rich and poverty traps for the poor. But the money must come from somewhere; and it is pretty clear where. It will come from the sort of people who write, and mostly read, this newspaper.

You can tell a lot about how a party is thinking by watching the statistics which obsess it. The current favourite is the proportion of income that goes in tax for the bottom fifth of families (around 41 per cent) as against the top fifth (34 per cent). Gordon Brown is a Labour moderniser, but he is also the political heir of the staunchly redistributive John Smith. Were that statistic to be the same after five years of his stewardship at the Treasury, I guess that Brown could not live with himself.

The scale of the higher-rate increase will depend on the outcome of a conflict between John Smith's spirit, and



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

failure in 1992, and Tony Blair's presence and ambition for 1997. But that it will be proposed, we should have no doubt.

First, though, Brown is turning to the people at the bottom. The effect of his proposed 10p rate is actually quite simple; it would make work a little more attractive to them. If you are in work and on the main means-tested benefits - family credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit - you are facing a marginal tax rate of 84p in the pound. And in the most extreme cases, 97p.

Astonishing, isn't it? The incentive-sapping, high marginal tax rates that existed under Labour in the Seventies, and which most people in the country assume are long gone, are still around. But, like tuberculosis, only among the poorest workers. Labour wouldn't only have to cut the lowest tax rate to 10p. It would also have to make the "tapers", which determine how much benefit people in work get, more generous.

We are not talking about a fiscal revolution. This £6.5bn package would only take the marginal rate for low-paid workers down to around 60-70p in the pound. But it would help. Paul

Gregg of the London School of Economics calls the Brown plan "tax cuts with a conscience... trying to take the temporary and low-paid jobs generated over the last 15 years and make them a viable vehicle for getting from unemployment into work".

It marks, at least on the surface, a transformation in Labour's attitude to what are sometimes called the hamburger-flipping jobs. Up to now, the mix of trade union-inspired hauteur and angry political derision about the kinds of employment generated in the Eighties and Nineties led old Labour to act as if these jobs were too disgraceful to be included in policy-making - facts that shouldn't be spoken of in polite society.

Now, with this tax proposal and the minimum wage coming in below the unions' preferred figure, new Labour is seeking, instead, to make the most of them. It could signal the beginning of a genuinely new Labour economics, breaking with trade union-dominated attitudes to the labour market and with the present corporatism. But it all depends on how the party deals with public spending.

An intriguing new pamphlet by Professor Nick Bosanquet of Imperial College, London, published by the Social Market Foundation, argues that the changes to the public sector introduced over the past 15 years may actually lead to higher, not lower, pressures on public spending. Contracting out and arms-length agencies may have been intended to lower costs. But Bosanquet argues that they hand more power to big corporations and well-organised interest groups. He singles out "the vested interest

in rising public expenditure of private contractors undertaking government work... The nature of government outputs and the official contracting-out process favours large contractors in areas such as defence procurement, road building and capital investment in health and education... There is a growing divide between large corporations dug into markets where there is often substantial public spending and small firms struggling to innovate."

However briefly put, these are too little-recognised truths about what has happened to this country. It has become not an open meritocracy but a land of closed and private deals in which business and politics are too tightly, silently, intertwined. The evidence spills out from those dry, censorious reports of the National Audit Office or the Audit Commission.

For Labour, it marks the real challenge. Changing the tax system would only be accepted by the all-important middle classes if they thought the party was genuinely trying to be fair, and was determined to hold down public spending - no special cases, no class of insiders, no group of chums exempt from the general will.

An anti-corporatist party of the left which came into power determined to run its tax and spending policy without reference either to the unions or to the big corporations digging into the rich mine of public expenditure would be in for a rough ride. Tilting the system back to lower-paid people and small businesses would be furiously resisted by the new corporatists of the Nineties. But by God, it would be worth it.

Becket's brains: a snip at 50p

Not long ago I was in the Canterbury area for the first time in a long time and I realised that you now had to pay to get inside the cathedral. My wife, an ex-inhabitant of Canterbury, was most indignant at being charged £2 to enter a place she used to frequent for free. I mentioned this in print, in this very column. I received several letters from Canterbury residents hotly defending the entry charge and saying that, quite apart from the revenue it raised, it helped to cut down on the otherwise inevitable tourist throng, which was not only making the cathedral unbearable but wearing it away.

They might like to know that Monsignor David Lewis agrees with them.

Monsignor David Lewis is a Catholic clergyman who has risen to some eminence in Rome and now is in charge of the large and imposing church called Santa Maria Maggiore, where the very crib in which Jesus lay as a baby is still on display. I know that because I was there a couple of months ago, working on a Channel 4 film which was looking at the place of relics in the Catholic Church.

I think it was the first non-human relic we had seen, this crib. We had already viewed the skull-bone of Saint Chrysostom (an obscure Roman soldier martyred for converting to Christianity), the left foot of Saint Teresa and the heads of Saints Peter and Paul, but this was the first Biblical furniture we had viewed, and that was how we met Monsignor Lewis.

A tall, imposing, white-haired man, sturdy built like an old rugby player, which he might well have been, given the strong Welsh accent which he still retains. "Not just the accent," he told us, "I still speak Welsh. I very occasionally celebrate Mass in Welsh still, though I have to say that there isn't much call for it here in the Eternal City. Or what we call the Infernal City these days. That was a reference to the traffic and pollution," he added, in case we didn't know that priests like to make donkey jokes.

Sensing that we were somewhat sceptical of the authenticity of the Holy Crib - fair enough, I suppose, as nobody is likely to come out from Channel 4 to make a film aiming to endorse the authenticity of Catholic relics - Monsignor Lewis stressed that nobody guaranteed the genuineness of it.

"I believe it is genuine," he said, "but I can't prove it. We know that the wood is old enough, and we know that it has been preserved for as long as records have been kept, but we can't guarantee it. There are some things we can guarantee though. I'll show you something. Wait here."

He hustled off through the crowds in the Sunday morning aisle. He bustled back with a glass casket. "There you are," he said. "The only known remains of St Thomas à Becket. Absolutely guaranteed."

He twirled it as unconcernedly as if he were carrying a handbag. There didn't seem to be a lot left. A bone or two. A bit of cloth. A letter, or what looked like it.

"It's not a letter - it's the contemporary certificate of authenticity," said Monsignor Lewis. "We've had it tested by experts. Absolutely genuine. It lists the contents of the casket, which are a bit of shoulder, a bit of brain-case, some brain tissue and a long white shirt. It corresponds exactly to what we know of his death, when the sword sliced through his skull HERE and cut off the top of his shoulder HERE." He demonstrated graphically.



MILES KINGSTON

"Shouldn't this all be back at Canterbury?" I said.

"Well, it was all back at Canterbury," he said, "until the place went Protestant and things like this were rescued and brought back to Rome."

"Have they ever said they wanted it back?"

"Of course! They'd love to have it back! But it's out of the question. St Thomas was a good Catholic boy, don't forget. Canterbury isn't Catholic any more, so it should be in Rome. Of course, if they ever decided to come back to the true faith..."

I decided to consult him on independent business. "I don't know if you know this, but Canterbury Cathedral now charges for entry. I think it's £2 a head. What do you think of that?"

Monsignor Lewis looked at the coachloads coming in and out of his church and sighed and said: "I have every sympathy with them. Every sympathy. If I could take 50p off everyone who came in this church, my worries would be over. As it is, we are millions in debt, or at least we need millions to keep the place in good repair. Most of my time is spent fund-raising. Going on tours of America with my hat held out. I'd give anything not to have to do that. Just 50p, that's all it would take..."

I admit it. It seems I may have been wrong about Canterbury Cathedral.

Robert Block explains why South Africa's foreign policy is a pale shadow of what it might be

When Mandela went missing

A letter written last week by one of Ken Saro-Wiwa's lawyers to Nelson Mandela said it all. "Were quiet diplomacy pursued in South Africa... I doubt you would be alive today." South Africa's international humiliation was complete.

While the execution of Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues at the opening of the Commonwealth summit caught even the most well-informed Nigeria expert off guard, there is little doubt that Mr Mandela lost his international political innocence that day. The question being

South African foreign policy has had no vision to guide it

asked now throughout South Africa and elsewhere in the world is what went wrong? How could South Africa have miscalculated so badly? Why didn't Mr Mandela heed the appeals of Nigerian opposition leaders and intellectuals for more robust action to isolate General Sani Abacha and his gang of military thugs?

The answers point to shortcomings in South Africa's foreign policy and the country's lack of understanding of its place in the world. During the past two years there has been a glaring disjunction between what South African foreign policy stood for, what the world expected of it and what the government was actually doing. The result, according to Professor Peter Vale of the Centre for South African Studies at the Western Cape University, is that South Africa has no coherent foreign policy.

Over the past two years, the United States and the European Union, tired of dealing with all the maladies of Africa, have tried to push South Africa into the role of continental superpower. The plan was that the West would help to develop the country economically and in exchange leave Pretoria to handle African "responsibilities" such as regional peacekeeping and political power-brokering. While many bureaucrats in the country's Foreign Ministry and Department of Trade and Industry were keen to



Nelson Mandela: reluctant to accept the poisoned chalice of regional peacekeeper and power broker Photograph: PA

extend South African influence in a way they never could during the apartheid years, Mr Mandela was reluctant to accept such a poisoned chalice without making clear the principles for which his nation stood. Last year, he wrote that his foreign policy would be guided by the twin beacons of human rights and democracy.

However, South Africa's record in defending human rights and advancing the cause of democracy was not impressive even before the Nigerian debacle. The country's intervention in Rwanda, Lesotho, Swaziland and even Angola has not raised its voice against human rights abuse in Kenya. In the case of Nigeria it opted for its now-discredited "sooty-sooty" approach. The inconsistencies have not been limited to Africa. During two visits to Indonesia, Mr Mandela only made passing reference to East Timor. And while professing to

be guided in its arms policy by human rights, South Africa failed to support a recent international bid to ban the manufacture and export of land mines.

According to Professor Vale, the failings of South Africa's foreign policy have to be seen in the context of its recent past and a rapidly changing world. Throughout the Seventies and the Eighties, South Africa was isolated from not only the rest of the world but from the continent itself. Its foreign policy then was threat-driven, aimed at silencing nearby countries in response to the imagined "total onslaught" of communism.

After the end of the Cold War and the demise of apartheid, South African foreign policy was essentially rudderless, without any vision to guide it. At the same time the country found itself by force of events in the international limelight. Using its new-found respectability, it latched on to what Professor Vale

calls economic pragmatism, or the "neo-mercantilist" model of international affairs, which views the world as being driven only by economic issues: trade, industry, etc. The Foreign Ministry spent most of its energies using Mr Mandela's reputation to boost its quest for foreign investment. Thus the main business of South Africa's foreign policy was finding business.

But whether South Africa liked it or not, it was at the moral forefront of the world. Since his election as South Africa's first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela has seen a parade of monarchs, statesmen and garden variety politicians beat a path to his door. His moral standing and his courageous life have set him apart. Yet South Africa has been either unable or unwilling to cash in on the "Mandela factor".

"Everyone has been looking to South Africa to play a bigger role in international affairs and to lead. But

signs are that despite the moral gravitas of the President, the country is not ready to do so," said Glen Oosthuysen of the South African Institute of International Affairs.

Until last week, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, said South Africa would not lead a campaign to impose sanctions against Nigeria because it did not have the economic or political clout. That role, he said, could only be taken on by Britain or the US.

Much of the blame has been put on South Africa's Foreign Minister, Alfred Nzo. While

South Africa has been unable to cash in on the 'Mandela factor'

Mr Nzo gained extensive experience in the international arena during his time in exile with the African National Congress, he was also known as a poor administrator with a lack of imagination. His surprising appointment to one of the government's most important posts was in part attributed to the desire of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's Deputy President, to keep a hand on the till.

Whenever problems cropped up in Africa, such as in Nigeria, it was Mr Mbeki, not Mr Nzo, who was dispatched to deal with it. But both men have been obsessed with what Professor Vale has called a "fetish for compromise". They have both appeared incapable of deciding whether South Africa should lead or follow the Africa into the 21st century.

In the end, Mr Mandela must also take his share of the blame. Stung by the recent criticism that South Africa had not done enough to try to halt the executions, he has taken a course of the campaign to isolate Nigeria's rulers. To do so he is not relying on his country's economic muscle but on his own moral authority. In doing so he has made it clear that if South Africa wants to be a champion of human rights, its foreign policy must be brought into line with the moral standing of its leader. To fail to do so will only lead to more humiliation and the fall of the last of our heroes.

Generation Why

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING	DOLLAR
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OTHER SPOT RATES					
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15464	18999	Nigeria	107357	892000
Brazil	935656	59996	Philippines	10564	13650
Canada	14489	10925	Poland	231986	147450
France	126589	43700	Thailand	409214	262350
Spain	32707	34683	Portugal	128723	92500
United Kingdom	8363	4703	Sweden	5692	45470
Italy	275148	9400	Russia	706521	267000
Japan	362590	24400	South Africa	164400	14550
Germany	341005	34750	Tanzania	423002	273440
Greece	94633	52920	UAE	56908	36781

Tourist Rates

Interest Rates

UK Base	0.75%	Germany Discount	3.50%	US Prime	8.75%	Japan Discount	0.50%
France scavenger	4.80%	Lombard	5.00%	Discount	8.00%	Belgium Discount	3.50%
Italy Prime	9.00%	Casella	7.75%	Fed Funds	5.50%	Canada Central	4.00%
Netherlands Advances	3.80%	Prime	5.50%	Spain 90-Day Repo	9.25%	Switzerland Discount	2.00%
		Denmark Discount	4.75%	Sweden Repo (1mo)	8.50%	Lombard	4.00%

[illegible]

Money Market Rates

Interbank Sterling Cds	5	7½	Δ	7	6½	0½	6½	8½	0½	0½	6½	0½
	0½	.	8½	8½	0½	0½	6½	0½

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	EstConts	Open
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German Bond	(Dec 85)	97.29	97.89	97.24	125225	199720
J.G.Bond	(Dec 85)	121.97	121.96	121.84	2203	0
U.S. Bond	(Dec 85)	121.97	121.96	121.84	2203	0

Liffe FT-SE Index Option

Series	3550	3600	3850	3700	Total/vols
December	102/23	65/39	38/62	20/98	..

Commodities

Ex/come		Cash	A rths	Volume	LINE Stocks	chg
Alu	H3	1542-43	1880-18815	34850	564200	1825

per 100	A	E	Coin	\$	E	\$	E
Platinum	414.25	268.25	Britannia	401	250	Kruglands	377/80
Gold	219.25	26.50	Britannia	204	120	244/82	

AGRICULTURAL

ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures
White Sugar		Raw Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn	
ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures	ICE	Futures

Aug	325.80	May	1985	Vol:	505	Mar	130.30	Mar	335.75-333.50	333.50
Vol:	1,564	Vol:	0	Index	1,753	Vol:	631	May	336.50-334.00	334.25

Brent Crude	(\$/barrel)	Gasoil	(\$/tonne)	WTI	Products 1	(\$/tonne)
MPE	E-30mm	*che Yr ago	MPE	glass	Pink	From East C&E North West Europe

Feb	1843	+006	1889	Jan	1525	1525	Mar	1725	EC Gasol	180-181
Vol:	18,184		Index:	18.76	Vol:	18,498	Apr	1754	Heavy Fuel Oil	172.50

Livebeck	1970=100	1973=100	1973=100	1973=100	1973=100	1973=100	1973=100
Precious Metals	1973=100	494.95	+0.46	487.21	+1.59	483.25	+0.36

Source: Release, Series A-D. *1982 is a forecast and statement of Goldman Sachs & Co. †2000 is an estimate of Goldman Sachs & Co.

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Black Home Managed Inv \$2	\$22.28	\$54.87	Monarch Union	1579.9	\$833.3
Bateman	386.9	386.2	Monarch Union Managed Life	158.70	154.98
Clintel Medl Fld Supplies	312.4	328.9	NPI Managed	631.0	669.0

Coakley/Johnson Managed S4	1948	12621	Prudential Asst. Portfolio Managed	3263	3219
Cornhill Managed A	8880	10415	Prudential II. Managed S2	8868	9253
Crown Managed	8422	8264	Revere Managed S1	4483	4701

MARKET SUMMARY

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3628.8	+196	+0.5	3628.8	2943.4	3.9
FTSE 250	3968.8	+23	+0.1	3968.8	3300.9	3.5
FTSE 350	1801.8	+79	+0.4	1801.8	1477.0	3.8
FT All-Share	1953.7	+48	+0.2	1953.7	1678.6	3.3
New York	5001.9	+119	+0.2	5001.9	3874.6	2.4
Tokyo	8383.8	+227	+1.3	8383.8	14485.4	0.8
Hong Kong	9373.9	+80	+0.9	9373.9	6957.9	4.2
Frankfurt	2218.3	+170	+0.8	2218.3	1970	2.0
Paris	1881.4	-81	-0.5	2073.3	1720	3.2
Milan	8180	-10	-0.1	8391.0	5940	1.8

*New York Index & Graph at 1330 hours **FT/SE World Index Yields

MAIN PRICE CHANGES


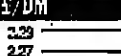

Rises	Falls
Guardian Royal 2075 15.5 5.8	Ream 338 37 8.8
Ladbroke Group 325 5.5 1.3	Anglo-Walsh 180 12.5 6.5
Forre 271 9 3.4	Burnd 171 8.5 4.7
Eurotunnel 99 3 3.1	Courtside 376 17 4.2
Bovis Lend Lease 170 5 3.0	Smith (OS) 255 0.5 0.2

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond
6.00	8.30	7.10
6.75	8.20	6.80
6.75	8.10	6.60
6.60	8.00	6.40
6.50	7.90	6.30
6.50	7.80	6.20

Money Market Rates			Bond Yields*		
Currency	1 Month	3 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Long Bond	30 Year Avg
UK	0.75	6.56	7.77	8.53	7.99
US	5.75	8.50	5.93	8.03	8.25
Japan	0.38	0.59	2.78	4.76	-
Germany	3.84	3.88	6.36	7.49	7.09

*Bankers' Indicators

Standard Indices		CURRENCIES		
£/\$  1.59 1.58 1.57 1.56 1.55 1.54 1.53		£/DM  2.29 2.27 2.25 2.23 2.21 2.19 2.17	£/¥  162.0 161.0 160.0 159.0 158.0 157.0 156.0	
T W T F M		T W T F M	T W T F M	

Pound				Dollar			
	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	15463	-0.9800	1568	£ (London)	0.6167	+0.24	0.638
£ (N York)**	15660	+1.2500	1567	£ (N York)**	0.6427	-0.82	0.638
DM (London)	21842	+0.3900	24452	DM (London)	1425	-0.7700	15594
¥ (London)	15688	+1.2000	15426	¥ (London)	10133	-10.92	9838
£ Index	82.2	-0.1	79.9	£ Index	930	-0.1	9514

*New York exchange rates and DM (Frankfurt) at 1330 hours

OTHER INDICATORS							
	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
Oil Brent \$	1707	+0.14	1693	RPI	146.8	+3.2pc	2.4 14 Dec
Gold \$	386.40	-0.10	383.15	GDP	106.6	21pc	4.3 21 Dec
Gold £	249.90	+0.80	244.60	Best Rates	—	6.75pc	5.25 —

IN BRIEF

Emap revenues slow

Magazine publisher Emap signalled a slowdown in revenue growth in the second half, taking the shine off a 70 per cent increase in underlying pre-tax profits for the six months to September. Profits improved across the company's activities, which include consumer and business magazines, regional newspapers and radio interests. Reported pre-tax profits jumped from £22.2m to £33.9m while the interim dividend, jumped to 3.7p (2.5p). Investment column, page 22

Ernst & Young revenues at record high

Ernst & Young, which is the largest international accountancy firm and has the second highest management consultancy practice among accounting firms, announced a 14 per cent rise in world-wide revenue to a record \$6.87bn for the year to 30 September. Nick Land, UK senior partner, said the increase exceeded world-wide growth for the previous four years combined.

Glaxo wins drug approval

Glaxo received approval from the US food and drug administration yesterday to market Epiriv, an anti-HIV drug, in combination with Retrovir, the treatment acquired at the time of the £9bn takeover of Wellcome earlier this year. Epiriv was approved under the FDA's accelerated approval regulations, which push drugs through the regulatory process if they are to treat a serious or potentially life-threatening disease. Glaxo Wellcome's shares closed 10p higher at 895.5p.

Sales up for life insurers

Hopes by life companies that the sales slump may be coming to an end received a minor boost after figures from the Association of British Insurers yesterday said premium income from life insurance grew marginally to £2.22bn in the third quarter of this year, from £2.19bn in the three months to June. However, total premium income for pensions business dropped from £1.2bn to £962m over the same period.

PIA proposes adverts by guilty

The Personal Investment Authority, the financial watchdog, yesterday issued proposals to force life companies and financial advisers found guilty of rule breaches to put adverts that say so in the national press. The PIA is also proposing to move towards regulating only the heads of its member firms, making them responsible for their own staff.

Asian central banks fight back

Asia's central banks have taken the first steps in declaring war on currency speculators. At a meeting in Hong Kong yesterday the top central bank officials from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand agreed to joint efforts to protect their currencies from speculators by supplying each other with funds while their currencies are under siege. They also laid the basis for further co-operation on monetary matters.

Grey market for National Grid shares

Shares in the National Grid Group, which is being demerged from the 12 regional electricity companies, traded at between 219-222p yesterday in unofficial grey market dealings. Although the grey market does not start officially until tomorrow, SBC Warburg made an unofficial grey market in the shares yesterday.

Boardroom battle: Conflict over who runs telecoms group unresolved as threat of hostile US takeover grows

Bid looms as turmoil continues at C&W

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Cable & Wireless was last night bracing itself for an opportunistic takeover bid from Craig McCaw, the US mobile phone billionaire, as another day of boardroom turmoil failed to resolve the clash between chairman Lord Young of Graffham and chief executive James Ross.

Sources close to the company said last night that two board meetings had failed to end the stalemate over who runs the company. Win Bischoff, the deputy chairman, met executives yesterday morning, followed by an afternoon meeting of non-executives where both Lord Young and Mr Ross were questioned closely.

A statement from C&W is expected this morning.

It is understood that Mr McCaw is currently holding discussions with his bankers and has the financial muscle to mount a £11.5bn hostile bid. C&W's shares closed up 3p to 420p valuing the company at more than £9bn.

C&W was plunged into chaos at the weekend after it emerged that Mr Ross had delivered a warning that he would go unless Lord Young is ousted or reduced to a lesser role.

According to a senior executive, the company's position is "unsustainable" and leaves C&W an obvious candidate for a bid. City analysts say that a successful suitor would have to pay at least £11bn.

There has been speculation that Mr McCaw approached BT at one point to discuss a joint takeover of all or part of C&W, including the One 2 One mobile telephone operation jointly owned by C&W and US West. Mr McCaw founded McCaw Cellular, a dynamic mobile communications company, in which BT took a large stake before selling out to AT&T.

Analysts say that AT&T would also join any battle for control of the group. Another potential name in the frame is that of Nynex, the US telecommunications group with which Mr Ross is already believed to be negotiating some form of co-operation.

One problem for any predator is that many of C&W's assets are in joint venture. Another is that the group's operations around the world are often licensed by national governments, who would have to approve transfer of control.

More immediately, the key to who wins the battle between Lord Young and Mr Ross is the

backing of the non-executive directors, led by Mr Bischoff, chairman of Schroders. He and his colleagues were attempting last night to hammer out some solution following the meeting with the executive directors but excluding Mr Ross.

Lord Young was widely perceived as having the support of the non-executives following the announcement last Thursday that he would remain as executive chairman until his 65th birthday in February 1997. But the Ross camp is insistent he has been successful in wooing Ulrich Hartmann, a director of C&W's European partner, Veba, which has a 10.48 per cent stake in the group.

Institutional shareholders have become extremely angry at the public debate. One said that both Lord Young and Mr Ross should go if credibility is to be restored but other City sources said that if one head rolls it should be Lord Young.

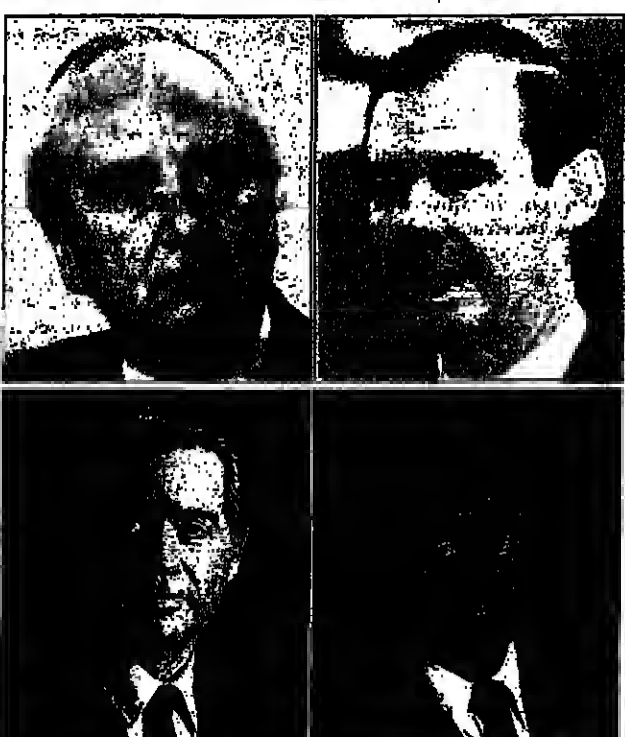
Should Mr Ross relinquish his post, the succession is far from clear. There is a view that the safest pair of hands would be those of Rod Olsen, the finance director, who has been with the group for a decade. Duncan Lewis, who in September shocked the industry by resigning as chief executive of C&W's Mercury Communications arm, could also be in the running. One source close to the company said Stephen Pettit, director for Europe, could take the top slot. Although he joined the board as recently as September, after coming to C&W in March 1994, he is said to be "on an extremely fast track".

One City analyst said: "Institutions want to see a new chairman who has a record of serving shareholders well and who would go about it in a straightforward way at C&W." Another said that both the chairman and chief executive have angered shareholders through "empire-building at the expense of short-term shareholder returns". He added: "They have invested in disparate start-up operations all over the world. Shareholders should be entitled to expect some return on those investments. But the management has made decisions which are inappropriate and expensive..."

Cable & Wireless has refused to comment, even going so far as to deny knowledge that yesterday's meetings were taking place. One insider said: "It's exciting - there is this big boardroom battle and we do not know who will win."



Rod Olsen, an energetic New Zealander, is the dark horse in the Cable & Wireless soap opera. The finance director was thrust into the spotlight last Thursday by briefing the press on the group's interim results - a significant departure from the usual joint presentation by Lord Young and James Ross. According to one insider: "Rod has thrived so far through sitting on the fence, always going with the grain. But he certainly has ambitions to be more than finance director." Mr Olsen was appointed to the main board of Cable & Wireless in 1996, almost 10 years after he first joined the group in Hong Kong. An accountant by training, his career before C&W involved stints at BP, Post Merivac Mitchell (the forerunner to KPMG) and the electronics industry.



The key players (clockwise from top left): Lord Young, the executive chairman; James Ross, chief executive; Win Bischoff, chairman of Schroders; and Ulrich Hartmann, a director of Cable and Wireless partners Veba of Germany



Duncan Lewis, who resigned abruptly in September as chief executive of Mercury Communications, is variously described as "abrasive" and "a real showman" - his own best description. He was seen by many as the natural successor to James Ross until it became clear that dissatisfaction with Mr Ross was one of the reasons Mr Lewis quit the top slot at Mercury after only nine months in the job. As yet without alternative employment, there is a view that Mr Lewis may be waiting by the telephone, and that he would be a good man for the job of C&W's chief executive. But the manner of his departure - and the resulting spotlight on C&W's beleaguered board - has ruffled more than a few feathers at the Theobald's Road HQ.

A mogul tuned in to all frequencies

DAVID USBORNE
New York

In all the lore about Craig McCaw, the Seattle-based communications mogul and ex-classmate of Microsoft's Bill Gates, one comment passed about him by a close colleague stands out: "Craig never met a frequency he did not like."

Fascination about Mr McCaw - and what he might do next - has only intensified since the sale of his hugely successful cellular telephone company, McCaw Cellular Communications, to AT&T for a whopping \$11.5bn (£7.5bn) last year.

Mr McCaw, who is 46 and married with no children, is the son of John Elroy McCaw, a pioneer radio and television baron, who died in 1969 leaving his family with considerable debt. Craig, who is dyslexic, and his brothers, Bruce, John and Keith, performed a quick turn-



Turnaround: Craig McCaw who is sitting on a fortune

around, however, creating a cable television empire that they sold in 1987 for \$755m.

The McCaw fortune grew, however, from the distribution in the late Eighties of wireless telephone licences around the US States by the Federal Communications Commission.

Markets: Wall Street smashes 5,000 barrier but pound sinks to all-time low as recovery falters

Shares in UK and US streak to records

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

Share prices in London scaled new heights yesterday, spurred on by a rise on Wall Street that sent the Dow Jones Industrial Average through 5,000 for the first time. But the pound caused consternation by sinking to yet another all-time low against a range of other currencies.

Wall Street's sharp move through the psychologically important 5,000 barrier bolstered London to a record high, up almost 20 points to 3,628.8.

The weekend's agreement between President Bill Clinton and Congress to finance the US government while budget discussions continue, sending 800,000 Federal employees back to work today, was one reason for this advance. A successful auction of US Treasury notes, no longer overshadowed by fears of an imminent government default, boosted both the bond market and shares.

Financial market expectations of lower interest rates on both sides of the Atlantic within the next month or two also helped fuel the rise in share prices. After weaker-than-expected figures yesterday added to the evidence that the British economy is slowing, the FT-SE 100 index closed up 20 points at 3629.

James Cornish, an equity strategist at brokers NatWest Securities, said: "We are seeing both a brighter interest rate outlook and a US effect."

The same evidence sent the pound to another record low, however. Its index against a range of other currencies closed at 82.2. While it recovered a fraction from Friday's record low against the mark, it broke its normal pattern of tracking the dollar's movements and fell against the US currency. The dollar rose against most European currencies, and by more

against the pound than against other weak currencies.

Both the expectation of a cut in base rates after next week's Budget and growing political uncertainty are undermining sterling. Many analysts are nervous about the scale of tax cuts in next Tuesday's Budget, fearing that political pressures will tempt the Chancellor to be too generous to the voters.

Robin Marshall, chief economist at Chase Manhattan investment bank, said: "Foreign investors are starting to price in the political considerations. This will force sterling down to new lows." Stephen Lewis of the London Bond Broking Company said: "It would be most unusual for the pound to rise in the year before an election."

However, others thought the

current exchange rate weakness could soon be reversed. "A stronger dollar and a well-received UK Budget could drive the pound back up above the DM 2.20 level," James Barry, UK economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said.

The pound closed at \$1.5460, down from \$1.5516, but recovered from Friday's DM2.1715 to DM2.1834.

Recovery came as official statistics revised down their initial estimates of quarterly growth in services sector output from 0.7 to 0.6 per cent and pencilled in a bigger-than-expected decline in construction output of 1.4 per cent, taking the annual fall to 3.1 per cent. Manufacturing output grew by just 0.2 per cent.

The single most surprising feature of the quarterly snapshot of the economy was that stock-building rose by almost £500m on the already high inventory increase of £945m in the second quarter. Without this further build-up in stocks, the economy would have ground to a halt in the third quarter.

Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europe, warned: "It doesn't look as if the anticipated stock correction has taken place, so it looks as if the next months are likely to see further weakening as the excess stocks are run down."

The main factor depressing

the economy in the third quarter was a 2.2 per cent fall in fixed investment. Together with a further small deterioration in net exports, this reduced growth by half a per cent compared with the second quarter. However, the depressive forces were almost exactly counter-balanced by a 0.7 per cent rise in consumer spending.

New figures released by Income Data Services showed that four-fifths of autumn pay settlements were between 3 and 4 per cent, barely keeping pace with inflation. Against this background, a record increase in consumer credit suggested that consumers are borrowing to finance that expenditure. According to the banks, consumer credit rose by £505m, more than double the September increase. A spokesman for the British Bankers' Association said there was no evidence that last month's unusual increase was due to distress borrowing.

Mr Field's options were granted in 1992 at an average price of 37p. He immediately sold around 175,000 shares at 268.5p to realise a profit of £405,000, but has retained enough shares to increase his stake in the company from 2.4 per cent to 3.4 per cent.

His fellow executive director, Richard Eteson, made a theoretical profit of close to £326,000 from the exercise of options granted at an average price of 41p in 1990 and 1992. His sale of 34,000 shares yesterday netted a profit of £77,000. The two were joined by Richard Koch, a non-executive director, who sold 750,000 shares worth a total of £2,011m.

Mr Field is credited with turning round Filofax after over-expansion in the late 1980s. Yesterday the group reported pre-tax profits of £2.91m (£2.12m) for the six months to September. The interim dividend rises to 1.05p (1.35p). Investment column, page 22

Filofax chief's million

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Robin Field, the chief executive brought in five years ago to turn round Filofax, was rewarded yesterday with a paper profit of £1.06m after exercising share options. He and two other directors sold shares totalling £2.58m as the company, famous for its personal organisers, announced a 37 per cent rise in half-year profits.

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COMMENT

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Brussels invest for Ja

RUSSELL HOTTEN

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Four big battle for Gar

JOHN EISENHARTNER
Financial Editor

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COMMENT

The two of them can not carry on living under the same roof. The way things are going, the argument about who gets the house may be settled for them with an outright takeover bid.

Rocks ahead of mutineers on board C&W

Boardroom rows always make a good story, particularly when they involve an attempt by mutinous executives to oust a peer of the realm. Unfortunately for Cable & Wireless, the present Borgia-like goings on at the top are all too likely to end in loss of independence. Craig McCaw, the US mobile phone billionaire, is just itching to get back in the game and probably has the financial backing to do it. With a host of others also running their slide rules over the company, including the giant AT&T, what better time than now to pounce, with the master and first mate openly fighting on the deck and the vessel drifting rapidly towards the rocks?

At this stage, it is hard to know who to blame for this tragicomic state of affairs. Lord Young, the chairman, James Ross, his chief executive, or the company itself, whose position as a medium-sized telecoms player in a world full of giants was always bound to make strategic decisions difficult to agree on.

As ultimate boss, the finger must point to Lord Young. A political and entrepreneurial wizz of undoubted marketing skill, Lord Young was a virgin at the business of a large multinational corporation before alighting on C & W as his escape route from politics.

Like all entrepreneurial types, he finds it hard to work with a number two. Even while in government he was notorious for it. At C&W Lord Young has turned that old adage of there only being room for one boss into a mantra, dispensing with one chief after another.

On the face of it, James Ross's position is equally difficult to defend. Refusing to become one of Lord Young's "disappeared," quickly abandoning ship in a few months time with his life-raft full of compensation, he has chosen to fight back through the press. Both executives and non-executives have been astonished by it, some to the point of outright disapproval, for whatever the wrongs and rights of Mr Ross's position, washing your dirty linen like this in public cannot help C&W as a company.

We do not yet know quite how damaging Lord Young's little "entrepreneurial" jollies in the Balkans, Kazakhstan, Israel and elsewhere have been. According to the Ross camp some of them are financially disastrous. Whether Mr Ross's own strategy of concentrating resources on the group's "hot" areas of the Far East, Europe and America will prove any more successful is anyone's guess.

One thing is certain. The two of them cannot carry on living together under one roof. The way things are going, the argument about who gets the house may be settled for them with an outright takeover bid. That perhaps is the best shareholders can hope for.

Mortgage picture is not that bleak

There have been numerous false starts as the housing market has stuttered into life and conked out again within months. Yesterday's mortgage figures have prompted

more gloom, but the picture is not nearly as bleak as the headline lending figure from the building societies paints it. This is a market ready to recover, rather than one struggling to avoid another slump, and Budget tax cuts look like being the kick start it needs.

The low lending figure itself is unconvincing and could prove to have been an erratic number. New loan commitments by the building societies after adjustment for normal seasonal variations have risen by around 4 per cent in the past three months, according to estimates by HSBC Markets, the City brokers. The big banks yesterday said their mortgage lending in October was close to the recent monthly average. Price indicators also point to a stabilising market.

But it is the bigger picture of taxation, interest rates and the election timetable that has really changed compared with a year ago. There will be at least two stimuli by next spring. One is tax cuts, the other a drop in mortgage rates. This is the exact reverse of the outlook a year ago.

Base rates had then just begun to rise, and the Budget last year taxed fuel bills and brought in the second stage of income tax increases, including a scaling back of the tax relief for mortgage interest payments, which together made for a calamitous first half of 1995 in the housing market.

Of course, disillusioned homeowners with negative equity may take some convincing that a real change is under way. One damper

that remains on the market is the level of mortgage debt relative to income, which remains not far below its all-time high. Gearing at such levels could slow any increase in house prices, perhaps to about the same as the increase in personal incomes. HSBC Markets, which is at the optimistic end of the City spectrum, forecasts a rise in prices of 6 per cent or so in the next six months.

The other problem is the all-important question of psychology. The calculus about whether it is cheaper to buy or rent still works out firmly in favour of buying, but first time buyers have not yet got over the shock that house prices go down as well as up.

There is a school of thought that says this experience will be imprinted indelibly on the minds of a generation and that house prices are set for a long decline in real terms, as happened in the 1930s. But it bears repeating that house purchase is more affordable than at any point in the past twenty five years. In any market - and housing has never been different - the turn invariably comes when most players have convinced themselves that the trend of the recent past will continue for ever. That, after all, is what fooled so many people into buying at the top in 1989.

A Dutch auction of taxes and spending

In his Mansion House speech, John Major reiterated the Conservative goal of get-

ting public spending below 40 per cent of national income. Meanwhile, Gordon Brown set out New Labour's stall as the low tax party. This Dutch auction of spending and taxation pledges is a depressing spectacle.

The best John Major can venture as a new way of cutting public spending is to invoke the Private Finance Initiative. But rest assured, Kenneth Clarke will still announce in his Budget next week that public spending is to fall before long below 40 per cent. Yet if the Tories have found it so difficult and so traumatic to cut spending in real terms, how much more so will it be for a Labour government. The party's commitment to social justice will see to that, whatever Gordon Brown may say about his iron belief in fiscal prudence.

The Shadow Chancellor proclaims his objective of reducing the starting rate of income tax to below the Tories' 20 per cent lower band. Even cutting it to 15 per cent would cost £4bn. We are not told where the money is going to come from - other than Labour's claim that it will manage the economy better.

We urgently need an honest debate about spending and taxation priorities. What we do not require is unrealistic objectives and unfunded pledges. Yet on the basis of today's dismal contributions from the two parties, that is what they intend serving us both in the Budget debate and in the election campaign which has already begun.

Aid dispute: Rift widens between DTI and the EU

Brussels team to investigate aid for Jaguar plant

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Hopes that Brussels would rubber-stamp the Government's £80m aid package to Jaguar were dealt another blow after the European Commission said it wanted to talk to the car company's suppliers.

Investigators from the Commission's fair trade office are due in the West Midlands over the next week in a move likely to widen the rift between the Government and Brussels.

Relations between London and Brussels have been tense after EU officials complained that the UK had dragged its feet over requests for information about the grants package.

The Department of Trade and Industry had indicated it considered the Commission's approval a formality and it is thought the DTI was irritated by Brussels' interference.

Ford, Jaguar's parent, negotiated the aid as the UK's contribution towards the luxury carmaker's new £400m manufacturing plant in Birmingham, which will build a new small car.

The US car giant, which has just offered UK workers an in-

flation-busting pay rise, threatened to produce the model in America unless it got the money. Jaguar has said since it would not accept anything less than the full £80m. Brussels has accepted the award of £48m in regional selective assistance, but is concerned about the remainder of the package, from local authorities and agencies.

The Commission team is expected to meet executives from the company, but will also talk to suppliers it believes may be benefiting from local government grants.

One person involved in the negotiations said it was rare for Brussels to take such detailed interest in a relatively small sum. "Maybe it has something to do with politics as well as EC competition rule," he said. Such thorough investigations by the Commission are normally for higher state aid issues.

But a Commission official defended the move. "We are required to do this if we think there is a problem with the aid. This is us doing our job properly." He denied that Jaguar was being singled out for special investigation.

The visit also suggests a final decision is some way away, though both sides say it may be possible to settle the issue before Christmas.

Last month a DTI official visited Brussels in an attempt to settle a simmering row over claims that the department had been slow to provide information requested by the Competition Commissioner, Karel van Miert.

Normally, tacit approval for such aid would be sought from Brussels before it was announced. In July, when Ian Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, announced that Ford was to build the new X200 sports saloon in Britain, the DTI said it did not expect any competition problems with the aid. One critic of the DTI's handling of the affair told the *Independent* that the DTI had not fully thought through the terms of the aid, and was having difficulty answering the Commission's questions.

The award of the money have proved an embarrassment for the Government, and is likely to open the floodgates to other demands for money.



In the picture: Rexam's chief executive, David Lyon, with a giant photograph of actress Cindy Crawford produced using a Rexam process. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Rexam warning shocks the City

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Rexam, the £2bn packaging and printing group formerly known as Bowater, shocked the stock market by issuing its second profits warning in just over three months yesterday.

The shares plunged 37p to 335p as the company said profits are likely to be 20 per cent below last year's level, suggesting a figure of about £18.5m, after a fall in the sales margin to 8 per cent.

In August it warned the market to expect flat profits for 1995. David Lyon, chief executive, said destocking by customers had gone on "perhaps longer

than we expected" after a dramatic fall in raw materials prices. Polypropylene had fallen back to levels seen last year, after rising 100 per cent in the 12 months to June, Mr Lyon said. People were destocking below normal levels and the problem was being compounded by lower economic growth.

Rexam expects the combination to knock £25m off profits this year, with a further £7m or so from stock losses.

Destocking has been most pronounced in the coated products division, which operates mostly in the subdued US markets. The company's two spe-

cialty paper mills have also suffered from high paper pulp prices and low demand.

Mr Lyon said it was unlikely the "storms and squalls" of this year would be as bad in 1996. With raw materials accounting for 40 per cent of total costs, that would make it easier to manage the business.

Rexam said it remained committed to both capital and revenue expenditures both this year and projected for next. However, one analyst said the market's attention was now likely to shift to concerns over the group's balance sheet. *Investment Column*, page 22

IN BRIEF

DBS thrives on independent advice

DBS Management, the Huddersfield-based financial services group, yesterday announced a 26 per cent increase in first half pre-tax profits of £1.3m. The profits rise, which also reflected a 26 per cent increase in turnover to £33.8m, came after charging costs of almost £260,000 as part of the company's move on to the Alternative Investment Market in July. DBS's turnover follows the company's positioning in the past year as the largest network of independent financial advisers in the UK.

Since September 1994, the company's number of advisers has grown from 1,700 to more than 2,100, boosted by its ability to offer effective and cheap administration and compliance for members in the wake of tougher financial rules for advisers.

Monitoring problems knock Graseby

Analysts cut their forecasts for the electronic instruments group Graseby by about £4m to between £6.2m and £6.5m, after problems in the group's product monitoring division, normally one of its more reliable operations. The shares fell 13 per cent to 125p.

Ferry Pickering in talks

Shares in the printing and packaging group Ferry Pickering shot up 37p to 171p, a 28 per cent rise, after the group confirmed it was in talks which might lead to an offer being made. Ferry said in September it had received and rejected a tentative bid approach. At its current share price the company is valued at £23m.

Diploma looks for acquisitions

Diploma, the electronics distributor, said yesterday it was looking for acquisitions in all three divisions with expansion of its electronics activities a priority. In the year to September, profits rose 9 per cent to £26.9m after a 13 per cent rise in sales to £216m.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
All Leicesters (P)	85.3m (70.6m)	4.22m (3.58m)	8.7p (8.4p)	4.50p (4.00p)
Applied Microelectronics (P)	3.47m (3.58m)	0.05m (0.31m)	0.2p (1.4p)	nil (nil)
Capital Group (P)	4.58m (3.51m)	0.84m (0.84m)	4.51p (0.95p)	1.33p (1.2p)
James Cropper (P)	3.47m (3.38m)	0.61m (1.23m)	4.6p (9p)	1.1p (1.1p)
Diploma (P)	216m (192m)	27.4m (25.0m)	31.7p (28.9p)	14.5p (13.5p)
DNS Management (P)	33.8m (26.8m)	1.31m (1.09m)	12.9p (11.7p)	3.5p (nil)
ENAP (P)	334m (234m)	33.9m (22.2m)	10.6p (7.9p)	33.9p (22.2p)
Flintec (P)	19.6m (13.7m)	2.9m (2.1m)	7.4p (6p)	1.50p (1.05p)
S. Staffordshire Water (P)	30.4m (20.0m)	7.7m (7.0m)	85p (84p)	28p (19p)

(P) - Final (F) - Interim (M) - Nine months

Four big names battle it out for Gartmore

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The race for Gartmore, the UK fund manager, has entered the closing stage. The Prudential is the main British contender in a field that has narrowed to about four from the large number of interested parties at the outset.

Aegon, the Dutch insurer, Berliner Bank, a cash-rich, state-owned German bank, and BAI, the tobacco and financial services conglomerate, are the other front-runners. But BAT is believed to be in talks also with the Bristol & West Building Society.

Benque Indosuez, the French bank, put its 75 per cent stake in Gartmore up for sale in September. The remaining 25 per cent is in public hands. Gartmore is valued at £600m. Nationsbank, the fourth largest bank in the US, which has a joint venture agreement with Gartmore, is still considering whether it should make a firm approach. Under the joint venture terms, it has options on up to 25 per cent of the fund manager's share capital.

Nationsbank, which is advised by Flemings, had earlier been talking to several potential partners for a bid, as a means of getting around the US accounting rule that requires a speedy writing-off of the goodwill in the purchase price.

The Prudential, Britain's largest life insurer, which is being advised by BZW, is understood to be interested in Gartmore to bolster its own investment management operations. Gartmore, which has

some £24bn under management, has grown rapidly in recent years, and is widely seen to be a successful operation in the highly competitive sector.

Aegon, which is being advised by Morgan Stanley, is one of the top 20 listed insurers worldwide, and is already active in the UK via its controlling interest in Scottish Equitable, the life company. With a market capitalisation of £6.5bn, Aegon, the bulk of whose business is pensions and life-oriented, is not far behind the Pru in size, and is looking to expand its presence in the UK market. Scottish Equitable, measured by volumes of new business, is the largest provider of pension products in Britain, through Independent Financial Advisers.

Aegon and Scottish Equitable are believed to see an acquisition of Gartmore as a means of reinforcing investment expertise, and making the life and pension products more attractive.

Berliner Bank, which is said to be advised by Schroders, is the sixth largest German bank in asset terms. Forged by the recent merger of the state *Landesbank*, a retail and a mortgage bank, it has a large proportion of retained capital, which it is now looking to invest in international expansion. It has bought new City offices which it wants to become the centre of its investment banking operations. Gartmore would give the bank much-needed investment management and equity expertise, which it wants to develop with the prospect of pension funds evolving in Germany.

Raised eyebrows in the shooting fraternity following an enigmatic message in the *Motion Picture Herald*.

An advertisement in the classified section reads: "Gamekeeper appealing for unwanted sweaters, needed for very cold grouse. Telephone F Croft."

Can this be Frank Croft, gamekeeper to Sir Lawrie Barratt and the man who runs the house builder's famous Farndale shoot in north Yorkshire? Apparently it is, although what the message means is not clear.

The betting is that the ad is a spoof, placed by a rival gamekeeper to poke fun at the Barratt birds. The Farndale shoot enjoys a handsome reputation and has consistently topped the local shooting tables. Our bettor on the 4,500-acre Farndale estate says the ad was placed by a blonde woman who paid cash, no questions asked.

Intermittent warfare between the local landed gentry must now be on the cards. For the record, Sir Lawrie is a keen shot.

This month's award for the most timely piece of research goes to Hoare Govett for its "buy" note on Cable & Wireless. Barely had it hit the streets when the full horror of the tempestuous working relationship between Lord Young, the C&W chairman, and James Ross, the chief executive, became glaringly apparent. "The next talking point will be an upcoming presentation on the group's cellular operations," notes the Ho-

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Much grouching in Yorkshire

No sooner said and the C&W board goes into crisis meeting to see which executive it can safely jettison.

Oddly enough the name on the bottom of the Hoare Govett note is James Ross. No, surely not? The implications are appalling.

A glance at the most recent edition of *The Estimates Directory* reveals BZW to be out of synch with other brokers over the prospects of Albright & Wilson. You will recall that the chemicals company failed to protect its stranglehold on the formula for liquid laundry detergents when the courts gave SB Chemicals, an Irish upstart, permission to produce 10,000 tonnes of the muck.

Four brokers all downgraded forecasts to around £55m. Not so BZW, the company's broker, which has increased its forecast to £75m, according to the directory.

"Good God, no," guffaws a BZW man. "Don't believe all that you read in *The Estimates Directory*." So has BZW also downgraded Albright? "Ahem... we... er really would rather not comment."

A change in name has done nothing to Rexam, the packaging group, which yesterday issued its second profits warning since ceasing to be Bowater (there is a school of thought that this is defeating the object of the exercise). Perhaps sensing a rough ride, David Lyon, chief executive, and Michael Hartnall, finance director, conspired to be a long way from their desks. In Australia, in fact.



For the birds: Warfare looms among the landed gentry

The England rugby team may be in need of some refurbishment following its drubbing at the hands of South Africa on Saturday but the same cannot be said for the corporate hospitality boxes that now grace the new Twickenham stadium. The National Westminster Bank function was particularly agreeable, drawing comparisons with the Barclays do at Wembley for the Rolling Stones concert. The only alarming moments came when the South African VIPs began chanting a crescendo of "Bok Bok Bok" as their team applied pressure. And when they relieved the English VIPs of their money.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Good news from Emap fails to cheer

There was a storming set of interim figures from Emap, the magazines to radio group, so the market's unwillingness to reward an unexpectedly large profits increase with a share price rise was telling. The failure of shares to respond to good news is one of the signs of the end of a bull run, so shareholders should take note of yesterday's unchanged close at 553p.

First, the good news, though. Underlying half-time profits up 70 per cent served to confirm the benefits of Emap's continuing focus on specialist niche publishing, the timing of its diversifications into France and commercial radio, and the skill of its handling of spiralling newspaper costs.

Specialist magazines such as *Motor Cycle News*, *Angling Times* and *Empire* are actually among the last expenditures to go when consumers are cutting back. Even in bad times, circulations stay high, cover prices can be increased and advertising yields pushed higher. In the good times, profits and cash flood in, so the division's higher operating margins were no surprise.

Moving into radio, with last year's

TransWorld acquisition and the more recent Metro Radio buy, could not have been better timed: just as the industry was increasing its share of the overall advertising cake. While ad revenue growth has slowed in the past six months it is still way ahead of Emap's other divisions and rates were pushed a useful 16 per cent higher.

Elsewhere, good management helped create an 8 per cent margin in France, compared with nothing at all a year ago, and wiped out the negative impact of a 30 per cent increase in paper costs for the newspaper division. Overall costs in regional papers were held steady, which meant a 3 per cent rise in revenues was translated into a 22 per cent rise in operating profits.

Share prices, however, look into the future and, although analysts were yesterday nudging their forecasts slightly higher to about £82m for the full year, investors are more likely to focus on the company's downbeat comments about the slowing rate of growth in advertising revenues across its activities.

Having risen more than threefold over the past five years, the shares trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 20 to next April and a still heady rating in the high teens in the year to 1997. Even for a ship this tight, the advertising cycle will determine the share price and that is high enough.

Filofax rise could falter

Filofax has made plenty of money for those who backed new management to pull the personal organiser maker out of the mire. From 13p in 1990, the shares now stand at 269p, down 6p yesterday.

But the rise in the shares has slowed in the last two years and at some stage it is inevitable that doubts will start to creep in about the ability of the chief executive, Robin Field, and his team to maintain the faultless momentum built up through the recovery phase. Yesterday's half-

way figures certainly showed no let-up in the recent steady expansion. Pre-tax profits shot ahead 37 per cent to £2.91m in the six months to September, with management demonstrating its own confidence in the future with a 29 per cent rise in the interim dividend to 1.35p.

The UK market, the most mature for the original Filofax organiser, is still clocking up growth of between 10 and 15 per cent. But having picked up its nearest rival, Topps of England, in a £6.6m deal earlier this year, the group now controls a commanding 85 per cent of its domestic market, limiting future market share gains.

That puts the onus on the rest of the world and diversifications into greetings cards, pens and office notepads. Filofax itself still has plenty to go for on the Continent, with the four subsidiaries there reporting growth in excess of 50 per cent in the half year and spending on organisers in France and Germany way below that in the UK. The test for management will be banding that level of growth in the

core operation, while also juggling with developing businesses. A full-year result of £6.8m would put the shares on a forward p/e of 17. Holders should perhaps follow the example of some of the management yesterday and take some profits.

Heed warning from Rexam

Two profits warnings later, Rexam, Britain's biggest packaging group, has underperformed the rest of the stock market by nearly 36 per cent since it reported in May that trading conditions continued "by and large" to be helpful.

To be fair, the difficulties that prompted yesterday's warning of profits one-fifth below the 1994 figure of £231m have been experienced across the market. And Rexam was not alone in thinking the destocking that followed the levelling-off in raw material prices earlier this year was a temporary

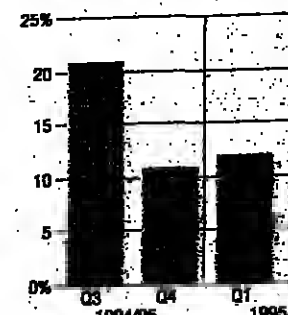
EMAP: at a glance

Market value: £1.14bn, share price: 553p

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996
Turnover (£m)	42.4	46.7	63.8	22.2
Pre-tax profits (£m)	42.4	46.7	63.8	22.2
Dividends per share (pence)	7.8	8.5	9.0	2.4

Consumer Magazines

Advertising revenue growth



Share price

pence



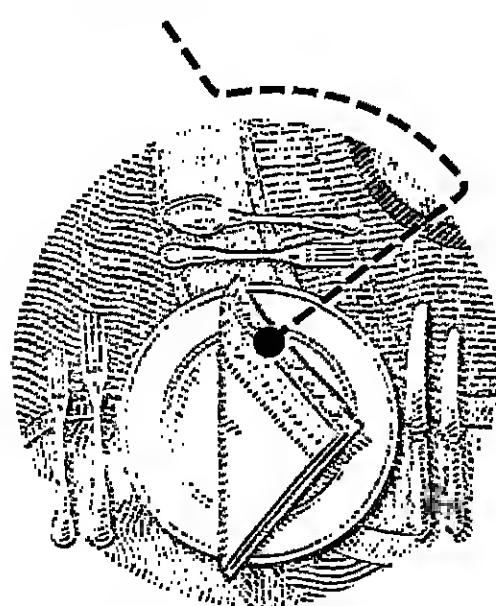
phenomenon. It wasn't, and the weak demand that prompted Rexam to announce in August that it expected flat profits this year has continued into the fourth quarter. On top of an expected £25m hit to profits, falling plastic resin prices and the threat of lower paper prices is likely to lead to some write-

downs of stock values at the year-end. Profits of £185m this year would put the shares, down 37p at 335p, on a prospective multiple of 15. But the real question is how Rexam fares in 1996. Even if profits bounce back to £200m next year, the shares will still be on a price/earnings ratio of 13. Avoid for now.

Improving business performance.

A few helpful ideas from Mercury.

A business lunch.



1. Cut out the business lunch.

- Enables employees to walk in a straight line during the afternoon.
- Significantly reduces the chances of being asked a difficult business question whilst struggling with a lobster claw.
- Food and business are mutually incompatible and inevitably lead to talking with your mouth full.
- Lunch is a security risk. Remember, walls have ears, and tables have legs.

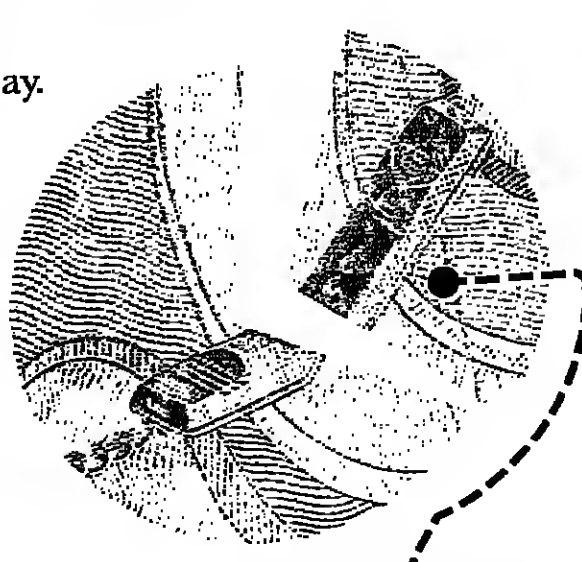
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US balances while British deficit burns

ECONOMIC VIEW

HAMISH McRAE



Sure, Labour can bring in a new 10p in the pound tax, but what will it do about the deficit?

It is always difficult for the markets to hit it right on day one, for second thoughts are usually better than knee-jerk reactions. Nevertheless, the positive response to the US budget deal shouts that this is pretty near the top end of the range of expectations. It charted a clearer path to the balanced budget than had been expected, and more important, one that might actually be followed.

If that is right, and it will be a year or two before we know for sure, the US has established a new global standard. Governments around the world will have to show some credible path towards a balanced budget if they wish to borrow on half-reasonable terms. The US government already borrows at lower real interest rates than any other large industrial country, with the possible exception of Japan. Stir in a dash of fiscal responsibility and this begins to become a significant comparative advantage, not so much for the government itself and for its taxpayers, but for the business community as a whole.

The lower the real interest rate at which the state can bor-

soften the entry into the income tax threshold by bringing in the new 10 per cent starting rate. But there is nothing about the much more important issue of the proposed fiscal stance. Would a Labour government seek some limit on its power to borrow? Does it have any view about the morality of borrowing, given that a deficit is deferred taxation?

In other words, the discussion we are seeing in Britain, in the run-up to our Budget, is on a quite different plane to that in the US, where the common ground has been the need for fiscal restraint, and the main discussion about alternative paths to virtue. I suspect that in another five years the sort of debate we are having here will seem as antique as the British budget debates of the 1950s and 1960s, when there was endless argy-bargy about "the fiscal judgement": how much "debt" the Chancellor ought to "inject" into the economy.

So what happens next? I don't think anything will happen ahead of the election. We will have this Budget, and it will be discussed by most people in the usual shrill, politicised way. We may or may not have another Tory Budget, for it is not clear that the present Government will make it to November next year. But after the election I think the tone of the debate will alter, for two reasons.

Firstly, within the European Union we will be getting close enough to the official start date for European Monetary Union that the Maastricht conditions will be dragging deficits below the 3 per cent of GDP level. Individual countries may or may not make it, but everyone will be talking about fiscal deficits in a new and more aggressive way.

Second, and more important, the new world standard will start to assert itself. Markets will want to see some progress towards the balanced budget, even if that progress is pretty token, just as they want to see some progress towards an independent central bank.

Together these forces will exert a plunger movement on deficits: politics (at least within the EU) and markets will be converging on the same point. Result: a sea change in the way public-sector deficits are regarded.

Expect British politicians to catch up, with voices from both political parties pressing for deficit reduction, on the grounds of equity as much as efficiency. What is difficult to see at the moment is whether the voices will be stronger from the left or the right. That may depend on the result of the election, for it is self-evidently easier for the out-of-office lot to call for a balanced budget than for the ones in power to deliver it.

But that is all to play for. Meanwhile, reflect on the narrowness of the current debate. A starting rate of income tax at 10p in the pound is a sideshow. A bigger battle is on the way.

Tax at 10p in the pound is a sideshow. A bigger battle is on the way

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Meanwhile, from Labour there is this new (and in its own terms perfectly sensible) plan to

July 20 1996

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3,628.8 + 19.6

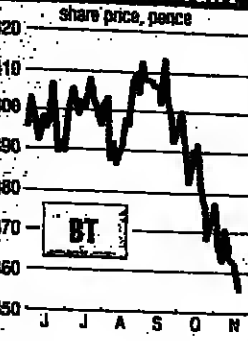
FT-SE 250
3,966.8 + 2.3

FT-SE 350
1,801.8 + 7.9

SEAQ VOLUME
657m. shares,
34,857 bargains

Gifts Index
94.58 - 0.15

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



BT misses out on the party as competition fears rise

As shares stretched to yet another peak one of the Government's biggest privatisation adventures slumped to its lowest for three years.

Two months ago BT was riding at a 414p peak. Since then the stock market has become increasingly alarmed about the growing array of competition that seems to threaten the group, and its seemingly unhappy relationship with the industry regulator.

The suspicion that job cuts and other cost savings, plus the controversial link with Tony Blair, represent BT's insignificant answer to its problems are worrying the market.

So BT is, in investment terms, dialling the wrong numbers. The shares fell a further 5p to 356p in busy trading with turnover printed at 26.4 million, indicating small investors, for so long fans of BT, are losing patience with Sir Iain Valance, the telecommunications

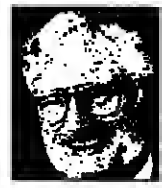
group's smooth-talking chairman.

BT's discomfort occurred on a day when even British Gas, recently bumping along at its year's low, managed to make modest headway, gaining 0.5p to 238p.

But although British was not the market's favourite pre-empt - even British Airways lost height - the confident mood, so evident last week, kept shares on a roll with the FT-SE 100 index closing 19.6 points higher at 3,628.8.

The market, despite cautious signals, remains convinced an interest rate cut is near and the economic background is looking increasingly favourable for the sort of teasing Budget the Tories so desperately need.

Weekend stories that Granada was about to descend on a hotel group had the expected impact with Ladbroke, owner of the Hilton chain, overcoming its gam-



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

bling setbacks and scoring a 5.5p gain to 132.5p and Forte moving ahead 9p to 271p.

Granada, results tomorrow, added 20p to 700p with talk of a 30 per cent profits gain to £345m.

Such is the excitable state of the market that there is even talk Granada could bid for Pearson, up 7p to 655p. Although the *Coronation Street* group is believed to be on the verge of expansion most observers expect its next bid to be rather less ambitious than the likes of Forte and Pearson.

Weekend stories that Granada was about to descend on a hotel group had the expected impact with Ladbroke, owner of the Hilton chain, overcoming its gam-

bling setbacks and scoring a 5.5p gain to 132.5p and Forte moving ahead 9p to 271p.

The shares fell 37p to 335p, dragging down the already disillusioned Arjo Wiggins Appleton 12.5p to 180p. David Smith gave up 10.5p to 255p.

On the electrical pitch Graseby fell 18p to 125p on a profit warning; the boardroom power struggle at Cable & Wireless left the shares 3p higher at 420p.

BT rose 3p to 338p with NatWest Securities supportive, but the sterling/Australian dollar rate prompted much of the action.

The electricity utilities were firm with SBC Warburg making an unofficial market in National Grid shares. The spread was put at 219p/222p. The

Stock Exchange grey market in the shares opens tomorrow.

Financial shares continued to bubble. Legal & General added 9p to 684p on dividend considerations; Standard Chartered gained 11p to 557p as talk continued to circulate of a takeover strike.

BICC remained in the takeover frame with stories three buyers were pursuing its housebuilding division adding to the interest. The shares rose 5p to 281p.

Cortec International, the bio babe, drifted 2p lower to 145p although Dr Erling Refsum's dedication to the group remains undimmed.

The Yamaichi analyst drew attention to recent deals which increased marketing prospects and, he believes, lifted the underlying asset value to 270p.

The group, floated last year at 44p, should, it is suggested, make profits of £30m next year, although the current year

will produce another, if reduced, loss of £3m.

Beverly, the hard-pressed engineer that managed a Houdini-like escape from corporate disaster, moved ahead 0.25p to 1.5p after its moderately encouraging trading statement and £850,000 placing to fund developments.

Applied Holographics' surprising interim profit left the shares 7p down at 98p but printer Perry Pickering leapt 37p to 171p as it disclosed talks that could lead to a bid.

Toy Options, which came to market at 65p in June, jumped 14p to 101p. It has become the latest UK group to achieve a Walt Disney link, being appointed distributor for the toy range of a new Disney film to be premiered here in March.

Groupe Chez Gerard held at 197p. Teather & Greenwood, the stockbroker, expects profits to climb from £2.3m to £3m this year with £3.9m next.

Wakebourne, the loss-making computer services group where there has been talk of a shareholder uprising, held at 22p, a low.

The company, the old Maddox Group, has failed to meet expectations and there is talk that it will be put out of its misery by a takeover bid. Strategem, up 3p to 170p, is the favourite to pounce.

Millennium, a motor distributor that used to be the fully-quoted European Energy, is on its way to the JP Jenkins Oxf share market. It is raising up to £1.9m, offering shares at 1.5p. The group has sold its mining operations and, under the direction of Gerald Davison, former head of Keep Trust and director of Honda, is seeking to expand its car and parts distribution business.

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: ex rights x Ex-dividend x Ex-all x Unlisted Securities Market Source: Financial

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MARKET LEADERS: TOP 20 VOLUMES

Stock	Value	Stock	Value	Stock	Value
BT	25,000	RECOM	8,000	TSI	7,000
British Gas	24,000	LASMO	6,000	Envest Elect.	6,000
Verulam	13,000	Heron	7,000	Anglo Group	6,000
SEA Group	10,000	Seas	7,000	SEA Aerospace	5,000
BTM	10,000	Tecon	7,000	Barton	5,000
				Ladbroke	5,000

FT-SE 100 INDEX HOUR BY HOUR	14.00	15.00	16.00	17.00
Open 3621.7 up 12.5	11.00 3631.3 up 22.1	12.00 3636.9 up 27.7	13.00 3642.5 up 33.3	14.00 3648.1 up 38.9
09.00 3629.8 up 20.6	10.00 3635.5 up 22.1	11.00 3636.9 up 27.7	12.00 3642.5 up 33.3	13.00 3648.1 up 38.9
10.00 3636.7 up 27.5	11.00 3636.9 up 27.7	12.00 3642.5 up 33.3	13.00 3648.1 up 38.9	14.00 3653.7 up 44.5

Asia				Europe				Asia				Europe			
Stock	Price	Change	Index	Stock	Price	Change	Index	Stock	Price	Change	Index	Stock	Price	Change	Index
BT	356.0	-10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0	BT	356.0	-10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0
Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0	Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0
BTM	100.0	+10.0	100.0	Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	BTM	100.0	+10.0	100.0	Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0
British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0	SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0	SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0
SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0	BTM	100.0	+10.0	100.0	SEA Group	100.0	+10.0	100.0	BTM	100.0	+10.0	100.0
Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0	Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0
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Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0	Verulam	130.0	+10.0	100.0	British Gas	240.0	+10.0	100.0
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YOUTH POLICY: As transfer fees rocket and the pressure mounts on scouts to uncover the multi-million pound talent of tomorrow, many smaller clubs are facing greater competition than ever. **Guy Hodgson reports**

Hidden world of the teenage football market

It was the autumn of 1988 and the rebuilding of Manchester United began with the record transfer fee of £45,000 for Albert Quisball. The Sheffield Wednesday general manager, the late Eric Taylor, received the cash and then told reporters in private: "The real price was £25,000. The other £20,000 was for Mark Jones and David Pegg."

Both players had died at Munich, but sympathy had not extended to forgiveness at Hillsborough, where resentment ran openly and deep. Jones and Pegg had been Yorkshire schoolboys who Wednesday had anticipated signing. Something amiss, they believed, could only have tempted them to Old Trafford.

Forty years on and similar bitterness seeps through the game. Manchester United's youth policy does not have the stranglehold it had when the club needed to buy only one player between 1951 and 1958 but it is the envy of every club in England. The question is: are they getting the pick of the crop fairly?

Last week they were charged with illegally poaching David Brown from Oldham Athletic, a second case involving a 16-year-old following a hearing into their acquisition of Matthew Wicks two months ago. Brown had been with Oldham for five years. Wicks, an England schoolboy international, had been with Arsenal since the age of 14.

If either case is proved, the penalty will be punitive. The FA has almost unlimited powers to punish clubs, but a hefty fine and an order to pay compensation seems the most likely outcome, although the latter would be nowhere near the £750,000 which Arsenal are alleged to have demanded.

United vigorously deny anything untoward, but nevertheless their activities in the ambiguous world of encouraging promising boys to pledge themselves will be investigated in an unprecedented way in modern times. "There have been rumours about clubs for years," a spokesman at the FA said, "but there has never been any proof."

Proof has always been the problem and in a world without substance rumours gain a cre-



Young hopefuls: The pick of Manchester's youth on show at United's training ground, the Cliffr, as the Old Trafford aspirants take on their City peers

Photograph: Victoria M...

dence, particularly as emphasis on schoolboy football has been intensified because of rocketing transfer fees at senior level and the FA's new rules. Now clubs can sign boys as young as nine for their schools of excellence; until two years ago clubs were not allowed to have any link with a boy until he was 14.

That was the theory, just as it is theoretically illegal to give inducements to parents. But that has always gone on and, as the age limit has plummeted, so the potential rewards have escalated. Liam Brady's mother was offered a washing machine for her son's signature - not by Arsenal, it should be added - while other parents have allegedly been offered new cars or money thinly disguised as a fee "for a bit of scouting".

Those are minor temptations compared to the rewards available today from a child's exceptional ability as a footballer. In Manchester the

parents of a gifted eight-year-old by the name of Kane Jackson allege they were offered £50,000 for their son to join a club's school of excellence. They turned it down, although it did not stop them hiring the football agent, Eric Hall, for a short spell, which led in turn to Kane displaying his skills to a 20,000 crowd in Dubai.

One First Division scout said he knew that clubs used inducements to tempt promising boys away. "Put it this way," he said. "When you play the really big teams the temptation is to rest your better players. The last thing you need is letting them know you've got a 12-year-old who could be the next George Best. You do and he'll be out of the door."

"The parents don't help. I had the father of one 14-year-old come up to me and ask how much we would give him for the boy to sign. We'd spent five years developing that boy. So much for loyalty."

The scout did not want his words attributed, typical of the wall of whispers. Howard Kendall, as distinguished a player as he was a manager, was the same. "One club, I won't name them, offered my father money for me to sign but it didn't do them any good. He

The last thing you need is letting big clubs know you've got a 12-year-old who could be the next George Best. You do and he'll be out of the door

blacklisted them. His attitude was that he and I couldn't be bought."

If the pressures to get budding talent were intense enough for clubs to bend the rules when Kendall was a boy, and when transfer fees rarely exceeded £100,000, they are infinitely more so now that fees

of £5m are becoming commonplace. The United cases, you suspect, are just two of many and, no matter what the verdict, other clubs are likely to be emboldened in a complex web.

The simplicity of the rules hides a riddle of possibilities.

Talking about the Brown allegations last week, Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, was adamant that the club had not broken any rules.

"We are quite happy to answer the charge," he said. "We have nothing at all to feel guilty about. In fact we were probably third in line to speak to the boy. There were at least two clubs ahead of us."

Wicks' father, Steve, the former Lincoln City manager and QPR player, also rejects any suggestion that United broke the rules. "We are amazed at the allegations," he said after attending a seven-hour hearing into the case in September. "United behaved properly."

One of the problems is that the world of youth football is gripped by rumours. Ryan Giggs, who had been playing for a youth team with close links to Manchester City when he decided to sign associate school-

boy forms with United eight years ago, is a case in point. His name crops up in nearly every conversation you have on the subject in Greater Manchester, yet there has never been any evidence of inducements and to many people it would appear entirely natural for an exceptionally talented youngster in Manchester to choose United ahead of City.

Moreover, Jimmy Frizzell, City's chief scout and former manager, says the Giggs case was simply an example of a great talent slipping through the net. "Everybody at Manchester City gets blamed for letting Ryan through our fingers," he said, "but there was nothing we could do. His father and our then chief scout, Ken Barnes, had shaken hands on him joining us but he hadn't signed anything and he had every right to change his mind. City did nothing wrong and neither did Manchester United."

"Every club has players who slip through their fingers. Nick

Barnby joined Tottenham when everyone expected him to go to Old Trafford and even when you sign players you don't always get it right. United had David Platt on their books and released him because they thought he wasn't good enough."

Frizzell feels the FA regulations should be tightened to give clubs a tighter hold on their prodigies, but accepts that they are deliberately lax to prevent boys being tied before they are old enough to make a decision which, after all, could make or break their lives. "There are no easy answers," he concedes.

"I can't even condemn parents who ask for inducements to sign," he continued. "You're lucky if you get one boy in 10 who makes it to the first team. It's a huge casualty rate and who can blame a father for wanting something in his son's piggy bank for taking what is a huge gamble?"

It is hard to find the next Mike Milligan, never mind Ryan Giggs

You need only look at an atlas and the regulations pertaining to schoolboys and football centres of excellence to appreciate Oldham Athletic's problems. Nine to 14-year-olds are not allowed to be affiliated with clubs more than an hour's drive away, which puts no fewer than eight Premiership clubs within the compass of local talent.

The M62 might have opened the Pennines, but for Oldham it brought Liverpool and Everton within range which, when you are already trying to compete with the attractions of Old Trafford and Maine Road, is just about the last thing you need. It is hard to find the next Mike Milligan in that context, never mind the future Ryan Giggs.

Which is precisely what the man who helped discover Milligan - twice transferred for a total of £1.8m - has to do. Jim Cassell, Oldham's chief scout, heads 35 full and part-time staff trying to attempt the improbable: persuading the flower of

youth that they will bloom better at Boundary Park and the First Division than the Premiership glamour at Anfield or Elland Road.

"It's difficult," Cassell, who has been acting on Oldham's behalf for 20 years, conceded. "We're competing in a particularly tough neck of the woods. Spotting players like Ryan Giggs is the easy part, it's getting them to sign for you that is hard. And it's getting harder because everyone now has a youth policy."

Mention of Giggs gave rise to questions about Oldham's current dispute with Manchester United over David Brown, although Cassell would say nothing for fear he might prejudice the club's case. The irony is not lost on him that he entered the professional game at Old Trafford as a contemporary of George Best. "All I will say is that they didn't offer my mother a thing for me," he said.

Oldham run five sides for boys aged 12 to 16, on top of

A, B, reserve and first-team squads, and Cassell watches between four and six matches a week. Even so he is dependent on others. "Scouting is team work," he said. "Scott McInven has broken through this year and I expect I'll get pats on the back for that, but my attention will have been drawn to him by a scout in that particular area. Then you try to sell the club to him."

"In fairness, we have attractions at Oldham too. We have a reputation for putting young players in the first team, so although we cannot offer the material rewards or the glamour of the big clubs we can honestly offer a great opportunity of a career in the game. You have only to look at David Platt and Lee Dixon to prove there is more than one route to get to the top. They were free transfers once."

Oldham's crowning achievements of recent times are their stay in the top division between 1991 and 1994, and their reaching the Littlewoods Cup

final in 1990. That team was created on the backs of the scouting network, Andy Barlow, Milligan and Nick Henry, rising from the youth programme. Paul Warhurst, Dennis Irwin and Earl Barrett being picked up for small change. "I don't think we'll ever hit such a rich seam of talent again," he said.

So what does he seek in a player? "With a boy you look for something he's not going to lose," he answered. "Blistering pace, for example, or a super left foot. At senior level I always think, 'Is he better than what you've got?' Of course, the bottom line with an experienced player is whether you can afford him."

"We have to sell to survive, and our philosophy is not to regret that, but to look at it as creating an opportunity for another boy. All we ask for is for fairness when it comes to attracting young footballers. The people who pay their money at Boundary Park have as much right as anybody else to watch good footballers."

Forest the focus of attention

By the time Blackburn Rovers' seventh goal went in on Saturday the chant of "there's only one team in Europe" sounded hollow, even to its authors, the Nottingham Forest fans. Technically, Rovers are still in Europe - they play Spartak Moscow in Russia tomorrow afternoon. Effectively, however, they are out. Qualification for the next stage of the Champions League is beyond them and England's European focus has switched to Forest.

They meet Olympique Lyonnais at the City Ground tonight knowing that victory over the two legs will make them the first British team to qualify for the post-Christmas stage of the UEFA Cup in four seasons.

Despite Saturday's thrashing, the portents are good. English clubs have lost twice in 18 Anglo-French European ties and the continuing hegemony does appear to have a psychological effect on the French.

Glenn Moore on a severe French test facing Britain's only real hope in Europe

Lyon are 15th in the French league - not one of Europe's strongest - and do not field a current French international. This is only their second foray into Europe in 20 seasons, although they were Cup-Winners' Cup semi-finalists in 1964.

However, they beat Lazio home and away in the last round which, Frank Clark said, "was probably the result of the round. They looked short of confidence when I saw them - in a bottom of the table goalless draw - but we have seen the videos of the Lazio games and they looked a very different proposition."

They are a typical French side. Very good technically and quite mobile. They are a better side than their league position suggests.

Forest were regarded as fortunate to beat another French club, Auxerre, in the last round

and Clark admitted: "I cannot imagine it will be as tough as against Auxerre. We were stretched to the limit for 180 minutes."

Mark Crossley's outstanding display then led to speculation that he might play for Scotland, for whom he is qualified through his grandmother. Cynics suggested that his performance on Saturday proved his eligibility for the Scots beyond doubt, although Clark would prefer him not to.

"It makes it difficult for me if he becomes Scottish," Clark said. He already has to juggle Silenzi (Italian), Alf Inge Haland (Norwegian), Scott Gemmill (Scottish) and David Phillips (Wales), while the reserve goalkeeper, Tommy Wright, is from Northern Ireland.

Much depends on how Forest, and Crossley in particular, react to Saturday's mauling. That match was watched by Bernard Lacombe, once noted for scoring the fastest goal in a World Cup match (after 38 seconds against Italy during Argentina '78, it was eclipsed by Bryan Robson's against France four years later). Lacombe, now Lyon's director of football, wisely said his team "would not be reading too much into the result."

However, it is bound to be relevant. If Forest react positively they ought to progress. Their success has been based on a well-organized midfield who work hard when they do not have the ball and break quickly when they do.

Roy will delay a cartilage operation to play, while his forward partner, Jason Lee, has a fitness test on a thigh injury. Both centre-backs are doubtful. Colin Cooper with a suspected virus and Steve Chettle with a back problem.



COOGAN. 1965. at home. sons and one dog.

Coogan's Run. 9.30pm, this Friday, BBC2.

BBC2 is proud to announce the arrival of seven Steve Coogans. This Friday it's the turn of the salesman from hell: Gareth Cheeseman.



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Apart from Kimberley, it has rained during every game so far, and for the last three and a third days England were not so much in need of the services of captain Atherton as captain Nemo'



MARTIN JOHNSON on England's undercover operations

24

RAC RALLY: Scot hits a rock in a hard place but overcomes two punctures to close on Sainz

McRae resorts to risk strategy

Rallying
DERICK ALLSOP
reports from Chester

Colin McRae had to revert to type yesterday, casting off the cloak of composure to kick and fight his way back into contention for the World Rally Championship in the manner of some latter-day Braveheart.

The Scot's apparent command of the Network Q RAC Rally became an heroic struggle against the odds after two punctures in the notorious Kielder threatened to sabotage his hopes. He effected emergency, not to say crude, repairs in his Subaru and went on the charge again.

At the half-way point, he had reduced a deficit of 1min 14sec to 39 seconds behind the leader, his team-mate Carlos Sainz, the only man who stands between McRae and the distinction of becoming Britain's first world rally champion.

Misfortune in the Mitsubishi camp conveniently left the Subaru pair at the head of the field. The overnight leader, Tommi Mäkinen of Finland, was forced to retire after clipping a log on the day's first stage, damaging his suspension and subsequently breaking his transmission. Sweden's Kenneth Eriksson, in the other Mitsubishi, hit the rock which caused McRae's first puncture and slipped to third.

That opening stage revealed McRae's hand. The posturing of the Sunday show stages behind them, the 27-year-old advanced from third place to a lead of 27 seconds over Eriksson, 43 seconds over Sainz. And then they arrived in Kielder. A third of the way in to the world championship's longest stage, the 36.61 miles of Pundershaw, McRae ran over an unaccommodating rock. He said: "By the time we saw the rock it was far too late at the speed we were going, so I hit it and the tyre went soft very quickly."

Sainz also had his problems. He reached the end of the stage with severe overheating. The stage wreaked havoc. Eriksson, too, lost two minutes after damaging the front offside of his car on that fiendish rock. Malcolm Wilson, the 39-year-old Cumbrian, rolled his Ford Escort into a ditch and had to concede it was the end of his rally.

ly. Alister McRae rolled his Escort, but was able to continue.

His brother, Colin, resumed with defiant and unrivalled pace. Sainz reported his overheating problem had been cured but was powerless to prevent McRae making up 11 seconds on the next stage, another four on the one after.

At Kersnape, however, McRae encountered another test of his resolve. Seven miles from the end of the stage he had a second puncture, and damaged suspension and bodywork. He not only made it to the finish but still managed to take a further two seconds off Sainz's advantage. McRae resorted to brute force and a log to make temporary repairs and then drove the 45 miles to the more orthodox service.

His Subaru duly tended, he revived his magnificent assault on the final two stages, at Grizedale, in the Lake District. McRae closed in by another 18 seconds. McRae said last night: "The problem to the suspension was not as bad as it looked but the punctures were much more trouble. I'm going as quick as I can to try to close up the massive lead Carlos had and I'm happy I've closed some of it."

Sainz said: "He's been lucky and taking a lot of risks. If he had damaged his suspension on a stage where another stage came straight after, he would have been out of the contest. I don't have any tactics for staying ahead, except driving as quickly as I can."

Network Q RAC Rally leading standings after 14 stages: 1 C Sainz, 10pts; 2 C McRae, 10pts; 3 T Mäkinen, 8pts; 4 K Eriksson, 7pts; 5 B Wilson, 6pts; 6 A Wilson, 5pts; 7 D Mäkinen, 4pts; 8 R Bursill, 3pts; 9 B Wilson, 2pts; 10 C Sainz, 1pt; 11 C McRae, 1pt; 12 C Sainz, 1pt; 13 C McRae, 1pt; 14 C Sainz, 1pt; 15 C McRae, 1pt; 16 C Sainz, 1pt; 17 C McRae, 1pt; 18 C Sainz, 1pt; 19 C McRae, 1pt; 20 C Sainz, 1pt; 21 C McRae, 1pt; 22 C Sainz, 1pt; 23 C McRae, 1pt; 24 C Sainz, 1pt; 25 C McRae, 1pt; 26 C Sainz, 1pt; 27 C McRae, 1pt; 28 C Sainz, 1pt; 29 C McRae, 1pt; 30 C Sainz, 1pt; 31 C McRae, 1pt; 32 C Sainz, 1pt; 33 C McRae, 1pt; 34 C Sainz, 1pt; 35 C McRae, 1pt; 36 C Sainz, 1pt; 37 C McRae, 1pt; 38 C Sainz, 1pt; 39 C McRae, 1pt; 40 C Sainz, 1pt; 41 C McRae, 1pt; 42 C Sainz, 1pt; 43 C McRae, 1pt; 44 C Sainz, 1pt; 45 C McRae, 1pt; 46 C Sainz, 1pt; 47 C McRae, 1pt; 48 C Sainz, 1pt; 49 C McRae, 1pt; 50 C Sainz, 1pt; 51 C McRae, 1pt; 52 C Sainz, 1pt; 53 C McRae, 1pt; 54 C Sainz, 1pt; 55 C McRae, 1pt; 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